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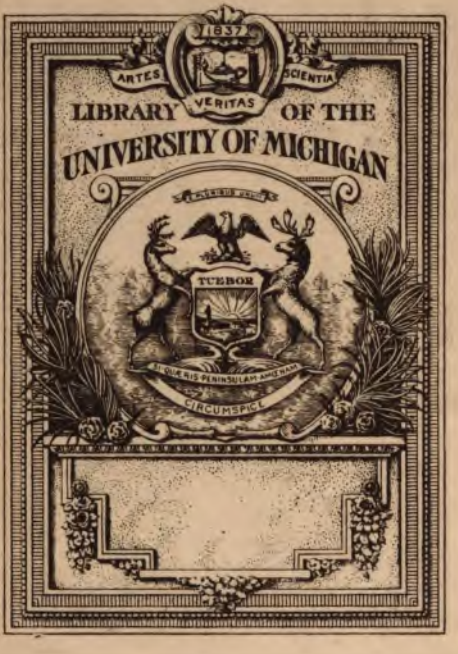
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THE UNPUBLISHABLE MEMOIRS

THE UNPUBLISHABLE MEMOIRS

BY A. S. W. ROSENBACH

NEW YORK
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THE BIBLIOFIENDS

DRAWN BY OLIVER HERFORD

THE UNPUBLISHABLE MEMOIRS

IT was very cruel.

He was dickering for one of the things he had desired for a life-time.

It was in New York at one of the famous book-stores of the metropolis. The proprietor had offered to him for one hundred and sixty dollars—exactly the amount he had in bank—the first and only edition of the "Unpublishable Memoirs" of Beau Brummel, a little volume issued in London in 1790, and one of two copies known, the other being in the famous "hidden library" of the British Museum.

It was a scandalous chronicle of fashionable life in the eighteenth century, and many brilliant names were implicated

therein; distinguished and reputable families, that had long been honored in the history of England, were ruthlessly depicted with a black and venomous pen. He had coveted this book for years, and here it was within his grasp! He had just told the proprietor that he would take it.

Robert Hooker was a book-collector. With not a great deal of money, he had acquired a few of the world's most sought-after treasures. He had laboriously saved his pennies, and had, with the magic of the bibliophile, turned them into rare volumes! He was about to put the evil little book into his pocket when he was interrupted.

A large, portly man, known to book-lovers the world over, had entered the shop and asked Mr. Rodd if he might examine the Beau Brummel Memoirs. He had looked at it before, he said, but on that occasion had merely remarked

that he would call again. He saw the volume on the table in front of Hooker, picked it up without ceremony, and told the owner of the shop that he would purchase it.

"Excuse me," exclaimed Hooker, "but I have just bought it."

"What!" said the opulent John Fenn, "I came especially to get it."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Fenn," returned the proprietor, "Mr. Hooker, here, has just said that he would take it."

"Now, look here, Rodd, I've always been a good customer of yours. I've spent thousands in this very shop during the last few years. I'll give you two hundred dollars for it."

"No," said Rodd.

"Three hundred!" said Fenn.

"No."

"Four hundred!"

"No."

"I'll give you five hundred dollars for

it, and if you do not take it, I shall never enter this place again!"

Without another word Rodd nodded, and Fenn quickly grasped the little book, and placed it in the inside pocket of his coat. Hooker became angry and threatened to take it by bodily force. A scuffle ensued. Two clerks came to the rescue, and Fenn departed triumphantly with the secrets of the noble families of Great Britain securely in his possession.

Rodd, in an ingratiating manner, declared to Hooker that no money had passed between them, and consequently there had been no sale. Hooker, disappointed, angry, and beaten, could do nothing but retire.

At home, among his books, his anger increased. It was the old, old case of the rich collector gobbling up the small one. It was outrageous! He would get even—if it cost him everything. He dwelt long

and bitterly upon his experience. A thought struck him. Why not prey upon the fancies of the wealthy! He would enter the lists with them; he would match his skill against their money, his knowledge against their purse.

Hooker was brought up in the mystic lore of books, for he was the son of a collector's son. He had always been a student, and half his time had been spent in the bookseller's shops, dreaming of the wonderful editions of Chaucer, of Shakespeare, of rare Ben Jonson, that some day he might call his own. He would now secure the priceless things dearest to the hearts of men, at no cost to himself!

He would not limit his choice to books, which were his first love, but he would help himself to the fair things that have always delighted the soul,—pictures, like those of Raphael and da Vinci; jewels, like Cellini's; little bronzes, like Dona-

tello's; etchings of Rembrandt; the porcelains (True Ming!) of old China; the rugs of Persia the magnificent!

The idea struck him at first as ludicrous and impossible. The more he thought of it, the more feasible it became. He had always been a good mimic, a fair amateur actor, a linguist, and a man of parts. He possessed scholarly attainments of a high order. He would use all of his resources in the game he was about to play. For nothing deceives like education!

And it had another side—a brighter, more fantastic side. Think of the fun he would get out of it! This appealed to him. Not only could he add to his collections the most beautiful treasures of the world, but he would now taste the keenest of joys—he would laugh and grow fat at the other man's expense. It was always intensely humorous to observe the discomfiture of others.

With particular pleasure Hooker read

that evening in the *Post* this insignificant paragraph:

"John Fenn, President of the Tenth National Bank of Chicago, departs for home to-night."

He laid the paper down immediately, telephoned to the railroad office for a reservation in the sleeping-car leaving at midnight, and prepared for his first "banquet." Hooker shaved off his moustache, changed his clothes and his accent, and took the train for Chicago.

As luck would have it, John Fenn was seated next to him in the smoking-car, reading the evening papers. Hooker took from his pocket a book catalogue, issued by one of the great English auction houses. He knew that was the best bait! No book-lover that ever lived could resist dipping into a sale catalogue.

Hooker waited an hour—it seemed like five. Fenn read every word in the papers, even the advertisements. He dwelt long

and lovingly over the financial pages, running his eyes up and down the columns of "to-day's transactions." He at last finished the perusal, and glanced at Hooker. He said nothing for awhile, and appeared restless, like a man with money weighing on his mind. This, of course, is a very distracting and unpleasant feeling. Several times he seemed on the verge of addressing his fellow-traveller, but desisted from the attempt. Finally he said:

"I see, friend, that you're reading one of Sotheby's catalogues."

"Yes," answered Hooker, shortly.

"You must be interested in books," pursued Fenn.

"Yes," was the brief response.

"Do you collect them?"

"Yes."

Fenn said nothing for five minutes. The stranger did not appear to be very communicative.

"Pardon me, Mr. ——, I am also a

book-collector. I have quite a fine library of my own."

"Really?"

"Yes, I always visit the shops when I go to New York. Here is a rarity I picked up to-day."

The stranger expressed little interest until Fenn took from his pocket the "Unpublishable Memoirs." It was wrapped neatly in paper, and Fenn carefully removed the little volume from the wrappings. He handed it to the man who perused so assiduously the auction catalogue.

"How extraordinary!" he cried, "the lost book of old Brummel. My people were acquainted with the Beau. I suppose they are grilled right merrily in it! Of all places, how did you come to purchase it in the States?"

"That's quite a story. A queer thing how I bought it. I saw it the other day at Rodd's on Fifth Avenue. I did not buy

it at first—the price was too high. Thought I would be able to buy it later for less. This morning, I went to see Rodd to make an offer on it, when I found that Rodd had just sold it to some young student. The confounded simpleton said it belonged to him! What did that trifler know about rare books? Now *I* know how to appreciate them."

"Naturally!" said the stranger.

"I've the finest collection in the West. I had to pay a stiff advance before the proprietor would let me have it. It was a narrow squeak,—by about a minute. The young jackass tried to make a scene, but I taught him a thing or two. He'll not be so perky next time. How my friends will enjoy this story of the killing. I can't wait until I get home."

The stranger with the freshly-shaven face, the English clothes, and the austere eyes did not seem particularly pleased.

"How extraordinary!" he said, coldly, and returned to his reading.

Fenn placed the book in his pocket, a pleased expression on his face, as if he were still gloating over his conquest. He was well satisfied with his day, so intellectually spent among the banks and bookshops of New York!

"By the way, I am acquainted with this Rodd," said the Englishman, after a pause. "He told me a rather interesting story the other day, but it was in a way a boomerang. I don't like that man's methods. I'll never buy a book from him."

"Why not?" asked the inquisitive Mr. Fenn.

"Well, you'd better hear the tale. It appears he has a wealthy client in Chicago and he occasionally goes out to sell him some of his plunder. He did not tell me the name of his customer, but, according

to Rodd, he is an ignoramus and knows nothing at all about books. Thinks it improves his social position. You know the type. Last winter Rodd picked up for fifty dollars a beautifully illuminated copy of Magna Charta issued about a hundred years ago. It's a fine volume, printed on vellum, the kind that Dibdin raved about, but always considered a 'plug' in England. Worth about forty guineas at the most. You know the book?"

Fenn nodded.

"Well, it worried Mr. Rodd how much he could ask his Western patron for it. He left for Chicago via Philadelphia and while he was waiting in the train there he thought he could ask two hundred dollars for it. The matter was on his mind until he arrived at Harrisburg, where he determined that three hundred would be about right. At Pittsburgh he raised the price to five hundred, and at Canton,

Ohio, it was seven hundred and fifty! The more Rodd thought of the exquisite beauty of the volume, of its glowing colors and its lovely old binding, the more the price soared. At Fort Wayne, Indiana, it was a thousand dollars. When he arrived at Chicago the next morning, his imagination having had full swing, he resolved he would not under any circumstances part with it for less than two thousand dollars!"

"The old thief!" exclaimed Fenn, with feeling.

"It was a lucky thing," continued the stranger, "that his client did not live in San Francisco!"

At this Fenn broke forth into profanity.

"I always said that Rodd was an unprincipled, unholy, unmitigated—"

"Wait until you hear the end, sir," said the Englishman.

"That afternoon he called on the Western collector. He had an appointment

with him at two o'clock. He left Rodd waiting in an outside office for hours. Rodd told me he was simply boiling. Went all the way to Chicago by special request and the brute made him cool his heels until four o'clock before he condescended to see him. He would pay dearly for it. When Rodd showed him the blooming book he asked three thousand five hundred for it—would not take a penny less—and he told me, sir, that he actually sold it for that price!"

"Don't you believe it," said Fenn, hotly. "Old Rodd is an unqualified liar. He sold it for five thousand dollars. That's what he did, the damn pirate!"

"How do you know, sir?"

"How do I know, *know, know!*" he repeated, excitedly. "I *ought* to know! I'm the fool that bought it!"

Without another word Fenn retired to his stateroom.

The next morning when Fenn arrived at his office in the Fenn Building, he called to one of his business associates, who, like his partner, was interested in the acquisition of rare and unusual books.

"I say, Ogden, I have something great to show you. Picked it up yesterday. In this package is the wickedest little book ever written!"

"Let me see it!" said Mr. Ogden, eagerly.

Fenn gingerly removed the paper in which it was wrapped, as he did not wish to injure the precious contents. He turned suddenly pale. Ogden glanced quickly at the title-page for fear he would be seen with the naughty little thing in his hands.

It was a very ordinary volume, entitled, "A Sermon on Covetousness, a Critical Exposition of the Tenth Commandment by the Rev. Charles Wesley."

"The devil!" exclaimed John Fenn.

"How the old dodge works," said Robert Hooker to himself on his way back to New York. "The duplicate package, known since the days of Adam! And how easy it was to substitute it under his very eyes! I shall call Beau Brummel's 'Unpublishable Memoirs' number *one* in my new library."

THE THREE TREES

IN the famous cabinet of John Bull Stevens was a superb impression of Rembrandt's celebrated etching, "The Three Trees." It was the only copy known in what print collectors chose to term "the first state." This exquisite work of art had only recently been discovered in Amsterdam by a world-renowned critic, and promptly sold at a fabulous price to the American enthusiast. It had several lines from right to left in the middle tree that had never been noticed in any other copy; the etching, according to the earlier authorities, had existed in but one state.

To the uninitiated all this disturbance about a few lines on the trunk of a tree seemed unintelligible and ridiculous, but to the print collectors it was considered a

magnificent "find," ranking with the discovery of electricity or the Roentgen rays. Periodicals devoted to the fine arts published many profound articles about the unique "Three Trees," and one of them suggested that such an extraordinary treasure should repose in a museum, where the art-loving public would have an opportunity to enjoy its marvelous beauty; it was a crime that it should be locked away forever in a private residence.

Robert Hooker was reading this one evening in the "Art Journal" when a thought came to him. Why not add this immortal work of Rembrandt's to his museum, which at that time existed only in his mind? Why not appropriate this etching and place it securely under lock and key, awaiting the time when it would be freely offered to the gaze of the public in an institution to be proudly called after his name?

He had already some tangible things to put therein,—the famous "Unpublishable Memoirs" of Beau Brummel from the Fenn collection; the "Kann" rug; and a few other wonderful curiosities that he had "borrowed" from celebrated amateurs as the nucleus of a loan collection in his mythical museum. The "Three Trees" should, by right, bloom in his own fair garden.

John Bull Stevens was unapproachable. He did not show his things. He gloated over them alone, in the most selfish, wicked manner, in his dark old mansion on lower Fifth Avenue. Admission was denied to everyone, except a few intimate friends; no one could see the originals of some of the world's masterpieces.

Art institutes pestered him with requests to examine this or that; celebrated students everywhere clamored for a view of Whistler's portrait of John Bull himself, or Gilbert Stuart's more celebrated

portrait of John Bull's grandfather. When curtly refused admission to his galleries, extraordinary letters were written him, full of caustic and delightful epithets, which had not the slightest effect upon him. It was said he had no conception of the universality of art, which includes kings and paupers,—wicked, rich collectors and virtuous, poor students!

To make himself appear more human, John Bull Stevens at last determined to publish a catalogue raisonné of his pictures, his drawings, his etchings and his engravings. He thought a beautiful reproduction or facsimile would be as satisfying to the critics as a view of the original.

Robert Hooker, for one, did not agree with him.

The catalogue was duly announced, to be published within the year and presented to the museums and libraries of

this country and Europe. Photographers and printers, art writers and reviewers were employed to get up the sumptuous work.

Hooker suddenly became imbued with a passion for photography; he became intimate with the distinguished artist who was to take the pictures of the Stevens collection.

Hooker became so much interested in his new work that he offered his services as an assistant, without pay of course. It was just for the experience. Nothing more. . . . . Hooker spent one whole morning in the Stevens' residence helping the celebrated photographer. They were to take negatives that day of the portfolio of seventeenth century etchings. John Bull was there of course, suspicious and watchful. The photograph of the "Three Trees" was made the exact size of the superb original.

When this had been successfully accom-

plished, Hooker, the careless assistant, seemingly nervous in the presence of the great collector, let fall the frame that held the great etching; the glass was shattered and Stevens swore as many picturesque and artistic curses as there were fragments upon the floor. The assistant was properly rebuked and as quickly dismissed; the unfortunate Hooker offered sixty cents to pay for the shattered glass,—which was promptly accepted! He departed, covered with ignominy under the glances of the angry Stevens.

That evening a plate was made from the negative by a new intaglio process. All that night on the top floor of a dingy building on Thirty-ninth Street engravers worked on the copper, bringing out the excellencies of a famous etching; old paper with the watermark of 1631 had been procured and all that remained to be done was the printing. By noon the next day a facsimile had been made, beautiful as the

original itself, as poetic and as glorious as the veritable "Three Trees."

But what was to be done with it, now that it had been created, a true brother of the original? The fertile brain of Robert Hooker had long before conceived the answer. The clumsy photographer's assistant had deftly dropped the frame with practiced skill, leaving the etching untouched, the glass alone being injured. There is even an art in *dropping* a picture!

But before the disgraced apprentice departed he had heard Stevens give directions to a faithful servant: "Take *that* carefully to Kemble's. See that a new glass is put on it and returned to me tomorrow, without fail!"

The next morning Hooker happened to stroll into the picture galleries, known everywhere as "Kemble's," and actually purchased something, paying for it with real money. It came hard with

him, for he no longer liked to buy things in what he termed "the ordinary way."

He purchased for sixty dollars a little etching by D. Y. Cameron, and, strange to say, not a frame in that great establishment suited him. One was too brown or too "antique," or not the right width; the salesman, who was a good fellow, became irritated. A whole hour wasted over a three dollar frame. He gave vent to his pent-up feelings by being excruciatingly polite, which is rude. He suggested that as Mr. Hooker did not see anything to suit his fastidious taste among the thousands of mouldings already shown, perhaps he would like to look through the samples in the workshop? Hooker reluctantly consented, and there among the old and new frames, in the company of gilders, fitters and matmakers he carefully made a suitable selection.

Of course the "Three Trees" was there. Its light could not be concealed—its beauty spoke to Hooker from a far corner. This masterpiece of the etcher's art was lying on a table awaiting the glass that was to guard and watch over it. The substitution was quickly and quietly made. The little Rembrandt was carefully, nay tenderly, placed in a commodious side-pocket of Hooker's coat; the treacherous younger brother was left upon the work-table, where it would shine by a false light —the light of the faithless, the reflected brilliancy of the wicked.

When the great museum was founded some years later, when it was acclaimed as one of the art institutes of the world, when great scholars extolled it, and poets sang of it, a list of its treasures was published which amazed the critics of two continents. Collectors in England, in France, in New York, were astounded!

Mr. Stevens read with envy that it con-

tained the only copy known of the first state of Rembrandt's "Three Trees." "Another newspaper canard! An infernal lie! A senseless fabrication!" he exclaimed. *His* was the only one; he did not believe another would ever come to light.

He would examine his own again. He took the etching carefully from the wall. What was the faint blur—was it a line at the bottom? It seemed strange, for he had not noticed it before. He would get his magnifying glass. He read, in microscopic letters: "Facsimile from the unique original in the Hooker Museum."

THE PURPLE HAWTHORN

WHEN the Appleton collection of Chinese porcelains was purchased *en bloc* by a well-known house doing business on Fifth Avenue, the celebrated purple hawthorn vase was considered the most precious of all.

It was a large vase dating from the seventeenth century, and according to eminent authorities, it was of the great Ch'ing Dynasty with the curious marks of the period known as K'ang-hsi.

The vase itself was very lovely; it was oviform with a graceful, flaring neck. The exquisite design showed a dwarfed mei tree with the most beautiful purple blossoms, with rare foliage and gorgeous birds painted by a great, although unknown, artist. The glazing was superb,

being transparent and of unusual brilliancy.

This noble work of art was valued at two hundred thousand dollars.

Three men of vast wealth competed for the prize, and the lucky purchaser was the eminent banker, John T. Sterling. Two financiers, known the world over, grew purple with jealousy when they first discovered that it was to go into the Sterling collection. Their faces resembled the color of the wonderful blossoms on the hawthorn vase.

Robert Hooker wanted to add to his museum this precious gift of the old Chinese gods. At the various places where the vase had been exhibited, he had often been seen gazing covetously at it. When it was offered for sale, he knew it was useless to ask the price—which was utterly beyond him.

One day, Hooker read in the society columns of the *Herald* that Jasper Fos-

ter was going to take up his residence in Italy on account of the illness of his only daughter. He intended to sell his fine old house on 17th Street, and all the furniture that it contained.

Now Jasper Foster was celebrated for one thing only. His name was known to fame but for a single object. He was the owner of the mate of the celebrated purple hawthorn vase in the Appleton collection.

Foster was an extremely modest, unworldly, retiring gentleman. In the last fifteen years there had been many inquiries about the vase, and numerous offers to purchase it, but he had always declined to part with it. It had been the property of his father and his grandfather, who had bought it from a sea-captain about the year 1820.

But now Foster was in dire straits. His house was mortgaged, and his daughter was ill with a malady that required a

milder climate than New York. It was on this account that he was going to take up his residence in sunny Italy.

As soon as Hooker read the brief paragraph in the newspaper, he hurried to the rather imposing house on lower 17th Street. With fear and trembling, he rang the old-fashioned bell-pull.

Yes, Mr. Foster was at home.

The maid showed Mr. Hooker into the first parlor. He heard voices in an adjoining room. Mr. Foster then had other visitors.

To pass away the time, he picked up a magazine but put it down instantly. He had heard the magic words "purple hawthorn." Some one else was before him. He would find out.

Going behind an old Spanish leather screen, he listened. He looked through the aperture, and beheld two men, well-known in the world of finance. One was

John T. Sterling; the other was James Thatcher, the celebrated collector.

Mr. Foster was not there. It was early in the morning, and perhaps he had not completed his toilet.

"Hello!—You here?" said one voice.

"Check-mated!" exclaimed the other.

"Damn it! I never expected to see you."

"Of course not. I know your mission. We had better see Foster together."

"No, I came first. I claim the privilege of the first interview!"

"No! I shall speak out. There is no use for us to bid against each other. It would spoil the market! I'm sure we can come to some agreement."

"No! I own the Appleton vase, and by right I should possess the other. It would make the finest pair of vases in the world! It will look magnificent in my house on Fifth Avenue."

"Don't be a hog—Foster does not know

its value. He was offered five thousand dollars for it after the Mary J. Morgan sale in 1886. If we offer him fifteen thousand he will think it a gold mine. You know he needs the money. If you offer more he will become suspicious."

"I suppose we both can't have it. We'll toss for it! that is when the business details are over. You make an offer of ten—and then fifteen, or more, if necessary. Your hand upon it! Play fair—this is not the stock-market!"

The two eminent financiers grasped hands. An instant later Mr. Foster entered.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, gentlemen."

"Not at all, Mr. Foster," replied Sterling. "We read in the papers you were going to Italy, and thought you would like to dispose of some of your curiosities. May we look around?"

"Certainly. I would like to sell some

of the things. I hate to do it. But to be frank with you the illness of my daughter has proved a great expense. I'm forced to sell out."

The two gentlemen looked around. One purchased a satsuma vase for a hundred dollars—seventy-five more than it was worth! The other, after much consideration, bought an East Indian brass bowl for fifty dollars—an extravagant price. They seemed to ignore the beautiful vase in a glass cabinet in the corner. They were unconscious of its existence!

"I have something really fine, gentlemen—the hawthorn vase purchased by my grandfather. You know about it?"

"I heard something of it once—but I've forgotten all about it. I would be glad to look at the vase."

They bent their heads. A thrill ran through them as they beheld the wonderful purple and the perfect glaze.

"That's not bad. Of course, its shape

might be better. People, nowadays, want the green or black. I have a beautiful famille rose. What do you want for it?"

"I've never looked at it in that way. What's it worth to you? Some years ago I had a good offer on it. But I didn't need the money then."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I don't want to be small about it. I'll give you ten thousand cash."

Mr. Foster was visibly affected.

"That is a good price. But I need more than that to see me settled in my little villa in Tuscany. What is your very best offer?"

"I'll give you fifteen thousand dollars, and not a cent more. And that's a mighty liberal offer."

"Well, that's all right. I'll let you know to-morrow."

"Why not now?"

"I want to consult my daughter, Caroline."

"Well, I'll not hold my offer open another day. I'll be here to-morrow morning at this time. Please don't keep me waiting. You know I'm a very busy man."

They paid Mr. Foster for their wares, and passed out; one with an old vase, and the other with a brass bowl in his hands.

"I think we've got him!" Hooker overheard one of them say, as the two passed by him in the dimly-lighted room.

Yes. Worse luck. Hooker knew it was useless to make other offers. He had not the bank account to compete with the famous connoisseurs that had just left. And he knew Mr. Foster was a gentleman of the old school, and would not use one offer to secure a better one.

"Good morning, Mr. Foster."

"Why have I the honor of this visit?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I read in the *Herald* that you were going to move. I

would like to know at what price you hold this house and lot?"

"Well, I'd sell cheap. Properties in this section are not worth what they once were. It is assessed at seventy thousand dollars. There is a mortgage on it of sixty. I'd take seventy-five for it. This section is too antiquated for residences, and business is moving uptown.

"But I *want* it for a residence. May I look through it?"

"Of course!"

Hooker examined all the rooms, noted the old-fashioned plumbing, and said that the whole house needed a thorough going-over.

"Well,—I think I'll take it," he said at last. "Do you want the old furniture? I would sooner buy it furnished, that is, if I could buy it at a price!"

This was a golden opportunity for poor Foster. To sell his house with its worn

furniture *and* the vase, in a single day was an achievement!

"I would sell the house and contents entire for eighty-five thousand dollars. I must exempt one vase, however. I've just been offered fifteen thousand dollars for it."

"Not for a single vase?"

"Yes, would you like to see it?"

"It's not much use. But I'm naturally curious."

Mr. Foster, with great dignity, showed the beautiful hawthorn vase. It gleamed silently in the glass case.

"What! Fifteen thousand for *that!* Perhaps, if it is really worth anything like that, I can afford to speculate. I might obtain a better offer on it. I'll give you ninety-five thousand dollars for the house and it's entire furnishings."

"No. The lowest is one hundred thousand."

"Done! I'll take a chance. Give me an agreement of sale, and the matter's ended!"

Robert Hooker had a white elephant on his hands. The house was really worth but the value of the mortgage, and the furniture scarcely five thousand dollars.

What was he to do? Thirty-five thousand dollars was a great deal for a poor man to give for a vase. . . . . .

He removed the vase that afternoon to his own modest apartment and requested Mr. Foster to refer any one interested in its purchase to him.

At ten o'clock next morning, he had an unusual visitor at his flat in West Eighty-ninth Street. John T. Sterling had called to see him. Hooker went into the living-room, visibly embarrassed in the presence of the great man.

"Good morning, Mr. Hooker. I'll state my business quickly. Mr. Foster tells me you purchased yesterday his house

and furniture. Now I'd like to buy it, if it's in the market. I think I could turn it into a garage. I need one in that neighborhood. I'll give you ten percent more than it cost you."

"No—not at all. I'll tell you what I'll do. If you give me one hundred and fifteen thousand for the house and its contents, *as it is now,* I shall call it a bargain. It'll be a quick turn."

"All right. We'll go down to my attorney's at once and draw up a bill of sale. The entire contents of the house as it is this moment, mind you. Come right along. You know I'm a very busy man!"

"That's known everywhere!" said Hooker, with a flattering smile.

On Fifth Avenue, that afternoon:

"Done! by God! and by a mere kid!"

On Eighty-ninth Street, that evening:

"*That* will make the Hooker Museum famous!"

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF SHAKESPEARE

BOOKLOVERS have considered the little volume presented by Francis Bacon to William Shakespeare the most glorious book in the world. It remained for many years in the British Museum, and many a pilgrimage has been made to worship at its shrine.

It was deposited in the Museum in 1838 by the Hedley family of Crawford Manor, and had been in the National Library for so long a time that it was considered the property of the nation.

The book itself was of great rarity as it was no other than the first edition of Bacon's "Essayes" published in London in 1597. It bore the following inscription written upon one of the fly-leaves:

To my perfect Friend Mr. Wylliam Shakespeare I give this booke as an eternall Witnesse of my love.

FRA. BACON.

In 1908 the Hedley family were in financial straits. It was discovered that the copy of Bacon's Essays had not been presented to the British Museum but merely deposited as a loan. The Museum tried its best to retain the precious volume, but the records were clear upon the point.

In December, 1909, the Hedleys stated that they would sell it to the Museum for £40,000 or fifty thousand dollars less than had been offered for it.

An unknown collector would give two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for it!

The newspapers inaugurated a public subscription to keep the volume in England, claiming that its loss could never be estimated as it was the most precious

memorial in existence of the golden age of English literature.

It was suspected, of course, that it would go to America.

After six months, it was found impossible to collect the money required. There was, apparently, but little interest in things of a literary and artistic nature. If it had been for a new battleship costing twenty times this amount, the money would have been forthcoming instantly.

It was finally announced in the London papers that the celebrated collector, William S. Fields of New York, was the fortunate purchaser of the world-famed volume. The news was heralded the world over.

When it arrived, Robert Hooker, an intelligent, but by no means wealthy, bibliophile, made a request to see it; to hold within his mortal hands this magnificent relic of the two great Elizabethans.

"No!" was Fields' curt response.

It had been rumored that Robert Hooker was founding a museum in some unknown spot—but where the money was to come from was a mystery.

It appeared that the Bacon-Shakespeare volume was locked up in a steel vault in the Fields' residence, guarded by an approved time-lock and other interesting features. The book was never to be removed from the safe, unless in the presence of the owner and a trusted servant.

Robert Hooker was extremely desirous of adding this treasure to his mythical museum! He said it was an outrage that one man, on account of the accident of great wealth, should become the sole possessor of it. It was a shock to public decency! It should repose, as it had for more than seventy years, in a library or an institution, where it could be freely seen. He therefore resolved to add it to his own.

But how? The book was constantly under guard in a guaranteed burglar-proof vault. To employ the most experienced crackmen to undertake the job would be almost insane. He could not try to substitute a facsimile as in the "Three Trees." To bribe the guard was foolhardy because the guard did not know the combination of the safety-lock. He was at his wit's end! Not a single practical idea entered his head. For once he was at the end of his resources!

Robert Hooker was a great lover of books. Like other kinds of love, the more he was denied, the greater the love grew; and time added fuel to the flames.

One evening in his library he was thinking what a pity it was that he could not see with his own eyes this evasive little book, when an idea flashed through his brain.

That night he did not sleep.

The following day Hooker paid a visit

to an old building in lower New York. It was the United States Custom House. He asked to see an appraiser whom he had known from boyhood days, and he talked with him for an hour about the weather, the base-ball score and other absorbing questions.

"By the way, Girard, that was a nice purchase Fields made last month—I mean the Bacon volume. I suppose you saw it when it came through the Customs!"

"No, I don't remember it. That's curious."

"Well, at any rate, it was free of duty by age!"

"I know that, Hooker. But even so, everything worth over ten thousand dollars, I personally examine."

"Well, it doesn't make much difference. The book should come in without paying duty. Perhaps it came by another port."

"No, through this. All Fields' things

come here. We are told to always hurry his through. He's got lots of pull, and we like to oblige him."

"Yes, of course."

"But Fields, too, has to obey the letter of the law. I want to look this thing up."

Mr. Girard was gone for over half an hour. He returned. "Here's the thing. Look at this consular invoice."

"Bacon's Essays 1597. £200."

"But what good does it do? The book comes in free, if it's worth a million!"

"I know. But Fields wanted this cleared the very day it was received. He or no one else has a right to undervalue, even if the article does not pay duty. I'm going to find out about this. I'm going to get that book back and examine it. Fields or no Fields, he must obey the law! I might get fired for this."

The owner of the Bacon was much disturbed. Mr. Fields did not like the pub-

licity that followed the newspaper revelations. He was much annoyed at one newspaper which said that if he undervalued non-dutiable things, how about those that carried a high impost?

Of course, the whole matter was nothing. And yet he was vexed. He did not like the notice that a Treasury official was to call for the sacred package that reposed within the solid walls of his safe.

The next day, a gentleman with an order from the Treasury Department of the United States paid him a visit. It was an official messenger in a blue suit with a conspicuous nickel badge. The great steel doors were opened and closed; the book was then removed; an instant later the click of the lock was heard. The other treasures in the vault were safe against the machinations of men!

Twenty minutes later another official called. Mr. Fields thought at first it was

the same gentleman returning. He came for a book that had been undervalued at the Custom House.

"What! I've just given it to one of your men!"

"Impossible, Mr. Fields. This order was issued to me!"

"Why, that's a fake. Why, the one just presented to me had a big red government seal on it. It was signed by the head of the Treasury."

"Must have been a forgery. This is merely an order signed by Mr. Bond, the representative at New York. But it's genuine!"

The various theories of the robbery that were advanced would have filled many volumes. Even the British Museum was suspected!

Mr. Girard, the appraiser, felt in his inmost soul that Robert Hooker knew something about it. He told his story to

the greatest detective in the world, who was in charge of the case for the Government. He did not want to issue a warrant for Hooker's arrest without any evidence whatever. He could not take into custody an honorable gentleman merely on suspicion. He had to have tangible proof.

The great detective accordingly employed three able assistants to examine every nook and corner of Hooker's house, including his library.

All this was done during the absence of the owner. The police even employed pickpockets to jostle him on the streets to make sure the book was not upon his person. Hooker had been under surveillance three hours after the robbery; it was either in the house, or he was not guilty.

Every book in his large library was examined. The police authorities finally had a complete catalogue of his collection, which some day will make interest-

ing reading. The detectives took pen and pencil and noted the titles of every volume with the year of publication; they admitted that bibliography and literary work was not to their liking. It lacked excitement and they all agreed it was only fit for poets, professors, and other inferior persons.

The detectives found it much easier at first to look for a volume bound in red levant morocco with "Bacon's Essayes" in gold letters on the back. This was the description given them of the original.

Fearing some error, and being naturally suspicious, they were compelled to be scholarly and open the volumes, but they did not find one dated 1597, or which answered in any way to the form and matter of the missing volume.

After a month of search, the detectives came to the conclusion that the book was not in his possession. Robert Hooker was guiltless!

When he is not going out of an evening, Hooker will often remain by the fireside in his library, reading his favorite authors. When no one is about, he will go to the largest book-case, and in a conspicuous place in the centre of the third shelf, he will take down a small thick volume, which he handles tenderly. He will often touch it fondly with his lips. It is bound in shabby old black calf and is labelled on the back "Johnson's Lives." Opening the volume you will see the curious title-page, which reads: "The History of the Lives and Actions of the most famous Highwaymen and Robbers. By Charles Johnson. London. Printed in the year 1738."

Sewed in the centre, and uniform in size, is another book which a short time before was one of the glories of the British Museum. It had been bereft of its red morocco covering.

It is destined to be the chief article of

interest in another museum, to be founded for the use and instruction of the public for all time.

For Shakespeare and Bacon are immortal!

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY

ONE of the most eccentric characters in the book-world was Doctor Morton. He knew a great deal of the lore of books and made a splendid living by stealing them. Old volumes were meat and drink to him. He lived quietly and respectably in a small New England town where he was honored for his learning and piety.

Although Dr. Morton was a thief, a pilferer of libraries and collectors, he committed a far greater crime, for which it is impossible to forgive him. Murder, assassination, arson and treason were naught to this unspeakable thing. It was worse than the Seven Deadly Sins.

Doctor Morton was unlike the celebrated Spanish bibliophile, who, not being able to obtain it in any other way,

killed a fellow-collector in order to secure a unique volume of early Castilian laws. He died upon the scaffold unrepentant, maintaining that the prize was worth it. All honor to poor Don Vincente of Aragon! His name shall always be tenderly cherished by lovers of books!

Doctor Morton *sold* the books he stole! This, in the calendar of bookish misdemeanors, is the crime of crimes.

Now this respectable citizen of Connecticut was a man of parts. There was no gainsaying his knowledge. His home was beautifully furnished, for he was a person of excellent taste. He would point to an old Italian cabinet in his living-room, and say to himself: "I paid for that with the first edition of Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' and, as to the Chinese Chippendale table: that was bought from the proceeds of the Elzevir 'Cæsar.'"

Sometimes his friends would be astounded at his unintelligible speech. He

would say in an unconscious moment: "Bring in the Vanity Fair in Parts!" meaning nothing else but an antique astral lamp, that he had exchanged for the first edition of Thackeray's immortal novel, or he would exclaim to his maid at tea-time: "Sarah, use to-day the uncut 'Endymion' from the Sterling Collection," pointing at the same time to a beautiful old silver tray. All the furnishings in his home represented a book "borrowed" from some famous library, and then shamelessly sold and the money expended on household gods.

Doctor Morton obtained the books of other men by many devious ways. For instance, he would write to a collector under the name of a well-known amateur, and always upon the most exquisite stationery, requesting the loan for a few days of the third quarto of Hamlet; he was writing a brochure on the early editions of Shakespeare, and it was necessary, in

the holy cause of scholarship to inspect the volume.

Alas! Poor Yorick!

The collector would send the book, and that was the last he would hear of it.

Morton would borrow a wonderful old woodcut by Albrecht Dürer, in pursuit of his investigations in the early history of engraving, and return in its place in the old frame a modern facsimile, stained to look like the original, and which the owner might not discover until years after.

It is not our purpose to chronicle the activities of this New England worthy, however interesting and instructive they may be. It was Doctor Morton's well-known coup in connection with the Welford library that brings him into this story.

Thomas Pennington Welford was growing old. He was a Quaker, a descendant of the Penningtons that came

over with William Penn. He lived in an old house on Arch Street in Philadelphia, just a stone's throw from Benjamin Franklin's grave.

He was a Quaker of the old school; was known as conservative by members of the Meeting-House; by others, as "close" and "tight-fisted."

Welford gloried in this saving habit. He was considered quite wealthy by his heirs, who were the only ones who approved of his penurious ways.

When he arrived at the age of seventy, he determined to put his house in order. He would sell his curiosities and his useless household furnishings to the highest bidder.

When Doctor Morton called one hot day in summer, Welford was in the act of examining his books, before an old mahogany case that looked as if it had come over with the first Pennington.

"Good-morning, Mr. Welford, you seem pleasantly engaged."

"Yes, sir. I'm looking over some old things. I want to get rid of everything that I can do without."

"I'm Doctor Morton. I'm interested in anything old or curious. Let me see what you've got. Ah! here's an old copy of Barclay's 'Apology.' That's very valuable."

"How much is it worth?"

"Seventy-five dollars."

"That much? You surprise me."

"It's worth probably more. Oh, look! Here's another gem. It's bound in full morocco. Sewell's 'History of the Quakers,' 1770. That's easily worth a hundred!"

The two book investigators pursued their investigations.

Mr. Welford was astonished when he learned that these old religious and controversial writings were worth so much

money. He did not know that the modern collector was purchasing for fabulous sums the old sermons of eminent divines.

According to the learned Doctor Morton, these were just the things that the rich bibliophile demanded!

In going over these dusty books and pamphlets, Doctor Morton laid the dingiest and shabbiest in a little pile. These were of no value he said, and worth only the price of waste-paper.

In the lot was a mutilated almanac, printed by Benjamin Franklin in 1733.

"Look at that dirty old almanac! A modern one is a hundred times more valuable!" Doctor Morton would exclaim; knowing at the same time that this first issue of Poor Richard was worth its weight in gold.

"That ought to be destroyed! It's a filthy attack on Willam Penn and the Quakers. If I were you I'd put that in the fire!" said the virtuous doctor, point-

ing to a little quarto pamphlet published in London in 1682, and one of two copies extant, the other being priced at $600.00 by a well-known book-seller. In it is the curious statement that Penn was fond of certain ladies of the wicked court of Charles II. And it was not in Lowndes, or in any bibliography!

When the last volume on the last shelf had been valued by the doctor, Mr. Welford stated that he did not care to sell immediately. He wanted to "look around a little." The books were really worth more than he thought.

"Then, sir, why have you put me to all this trouble! I've lost a whole morning going over your things and telling you about them. When you make up your mind to sell, let me know. This pile of trash you can burn, or you can sell it to the old-paper man. You might get twenty-five cents for the lot. Perhaps you might give a few of those worthless

pamphlets to me. You've taken up enough of my time."

"The lot will cost thee two dollars, Doctor."

"All right. Give me a receipt. This is the last time I'll give free advice to anyone! Particularly a Quaker!"

When Mr. Welford "looked around" he discovered that the beautifully bound sermons, eulogies, prayer-books and catechisms were worth next to nothing. He almost passed away when a kind friend told him that Poor Richard's Almanac was worth a thousand dollars.

Another amiable acquaintance cheerfully imparted the information that the scandalous pamphlet about the First Proprietor of Pennsylvania was valued at ten shares of Pennsylvania Railroad stock. At hearing this good news, he put on his gray hat and started full of righteous indignation to interview the lucky purchaser.

"Don't swear, Mr. Welford. That's not becoming one of your persuasion."

"Thou—thou—"

"Don't choke and splutter so. It's bad for the heart."

"Thee told me those big books of sermons were valuable. They're not worth the paper they're written on!"

"Now, you're becoming sacrilegious!"

"Thee knows that rotten old thing about Penn was worth all those catechisms and sermons combined."

"I naturally thought that a religious book was worth more than a scandalous one. That stands to reason."

"There's no arguing with thee. I'll expose thee, if it takes—"

"Oh, no, you won't. I have your receipt in full."

Mr. Welford thought a minute. A grim smile overspread his features.

"I congratulate thee, Doctor. If thee can get the better of a Philadelphia

Quaker, thou art welcome to the profit!"

Now this has nothing to do with Robert Hooker. It appears upon further investigation, however, that the candle-stick made by Paul Revere, silversmith and patriot, that stood upon the mantel-piece of the Doctor's home in Connecticut, was known under the outrageous name of "Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy in Old Calf."

Why this candle-stick was catalogued in this mysterious way was known only to Doctor Morton.

Three years ago the first edition of Burton's great book, published in Oxford in 1621, and in its original calf binding, was borrowed by the Doctor, who said he was writing an article for the *Atlantic Monthly,* on "Old Burton and the Anatomy."

The owner of the book could not resist the gentle demands of the true scholar, and sent the volume. He ought to have

known better, for his name was Robert Hooker!

It was not soothing to the imaginations of book-lovers when it became known that the two gems from Welford's library had gone into the rapacious hands of Doctor Morton, to be turned into an old mahogany sofa or a colonial high-boy.

It was criminal, and must be prevented at all costs. And Robert Hooker, smarting under the recollection of the loss of the "Anatomy" thought he would like to add wicked "Penn" and "Poor Richard" to his household. They would prove a considerable addition to his "museum of the imagination."

How to secure them was a problem! Ordinary methods could not be applied to the extraordinary Doctor Morton! The wisdom of the serpent was as nothing to the vivid intellectuality of the Connecticut Sage! It must be confessed that only New England could have produced

him; only the rarified bookish atmosphere of three hundred years could have engendered a creature of such genius!

Hooker never despaired. A remedy was close at hand.

He was walking one day, on Thirty-ninth Street, and just off Broadway, he noticed a very handsome mahogany secretary in an antique store. He entered the establishment, and asked its price.

"A hundred dollars!" said the proprietor. "This piece is believed to have been once the property of Thomas Jefferson. I purchased it from one of his heirs."

"I'll take it," said Hooker simply.

Three weeks later Doctor Morton entered a little shop on Fourth Avenue. He had received a letter from the head partner, asking him to call the next time he came to New York, and inspect a piece of colonial furniture of the greatest historical interest.

The doctor was almost carried away when he beheld the beautiful relic of revolutionary days. This would grace his home with rare charm! He asked the price.

"Forty-five hundred dollars!"

"I don't understand. Why is it so valuable?"

"That's Thomas Jefferson's desk. It comes from his heirs; the Declaration of Independence was written on it!"

"That's a pretty story. Where's your proof? Without documentary evidence, it's not worth more than a hundred dollars."

"I have the proof, Doctor. Look here."

The proprietor then rolled back the top. He put his finger upon a secret drawer. He took out a letter and handed it in silence to Doctor Morton.

He read as follows:

Monticello, June 12, 1821.

This secretary which is five feet four inches high and three feet wide, made of Santa Domingo mahogany, was purchased by me in Philadelphia in November, 1775, of Robert Aitken, the printer. Upon this desk, I wrote in my home on High Street near Seventh, the celebrated instrument known as the Declaration of Independence. Thinking that my heirs and others would value this article for its association with the sacred cause of liberty, I make this statement.

Witness my hand and seal, this twelfth day of June, 1821, and the year of American Independence, the forty-fifth.

THO. JEFFERSON.

Doctor Morton looked carefully at the letter. He examined the red wafer with "T. J." in faded letters upon it.

Accompanying the letter was another from one of the heirs of the celebrated statesman.

"The desk is cheap at any—" Doctor

Morton blurted. He caught himself in time.

"I'd like to own it. I'd give your price, but haven't the cash. I have some old books worth lots of money. Perhaps we can arrange a trade."

For two hours the two worked over this momentous transaction. At the end of that time, and in consideration of a rare pamphlet containing scurrilous remarks on William Penn, an old ephemeris printed by Benjamin Franklin and seven hundred and fifty dollars in cash, the mahogany colonial secretary was transferred to Doctor Willis Morton—to have and hold forever.

One evening, about a month later, the eccentric collector of the little Connecticut town sat down in his chair to gloat over and hold communion with his "literary" treasures, for he did not call them articles of virtu or specimens of bric-a-

brac, or furniture of the Jacobean period, but gave each piece that was dear to him a name that smacked of books and learning. His mind turned to the evil early life of William Penn, and the wisdom of Poor Richard, while at the same time his eyes were riveted upon a beautiful eighteenth century desk. A bell interrupted his agreeable visions. A telegram had arrived. He opened it hurriedly, and read:

Please look under red wax wafer on Jefferson's letter. Important Information. R. H.

Doctor Morton went to the secretary, and taking the letter in his trembling hands, gingerly lifted the seal of the third President of the United States.

"Damn!" he cried, as he read in minute letters: "A forgery,—in pleasant memory of my lost 'Anatomy.'

"Robert Hooker, *fecit.*"

IN DEFENCE OF HIS NAME

HE was again talking of his ancestors. He was always talking of his ancestors. . . .

It was in the library of a Fifth Avenue club, but the gentlemen seated at a window overlooking the famous thoroughfare were not discussing books. They were examining with care the beautiful ladies that always decorated this brilliant highway.

"*That*—with the blue bonnet and the short blue sleeves, is Mrs. Wilberforce Andre," said John Stuyvesant DePuyster. "Her husband is a descendant of Varick who served as aide-de-camp to General Arnold."

"That doesn't make her more attractive," said Robert Hooker.

DePuyster ignored the remark. "My great grandfather—"

"We know all about him," chorused the others. "Let-up, please. Have mercy on us, it's a hot day."

"My great grandmother, on my father's side—" persisted DePuyster.

"We know all about *her!*" the others answered, wearily.

"But Mrs. Andre reminds me of an interesting story. And you are always looking for stories. In January, 1779, my great grandfather was serving on the staff of Benedict Arnold. As you know, it was he, John Stuyvesant DePuyster, my namesake, who rescued the colors so gallantly at Saratoga—who fought at Germantown—who almost starved at Valley Forge—who rescued General Greene at the risk of his life—who was wounded with two bullets in his flank at the battle of Trenton—who served so brilliantly under Mad Anthony Wayne—who—"

The others looked at each other furtively, with misery indicated on every feature.

One of them, the great autograph collector, Robert Hooker, . nervously twitched his fingers. He seemed in agony, and looked around, evidently for signs of relief.

—"Who received a medal for gallantry at Monmouth," chronicled the voice in a perfectly satisfied tone,—"who rebuked Colonel Tarleton—who was praised even by the British commander Lord Howe—who sat at the court-martial of Andre—and who—"

"Was a traitor to his country!" said Hooker, quietly.

Everyone looked uneasy. They all hated scenes. But at any rate, it was a fortunate escape. A duel with bloodshed would be better than DePuyster's stories!

"Sir," he returned hotly, "an accusation

such as this has never been made against our family!"

"Then I shall be the first to make it."

"It is outrageous,—a damnable, lying statement, and you've got to prove it! I'll force it back into your throat, you slanderer! You've got to prove it, I say, Sir!"

"I have the proof!"

"Then you've got to show it. I demand it. I have the right to demand it."

"Two weeks from now, there will be sold at the Amhurst Auction Galleries, an autograph letter of General Arnold, in which he speaks of General DePuyster as an accomplice, who was ready to turn over to the British cause his honor and his sword. The catalogue will be issued in two weeks' time, and the full text of the letter printed. It might be well for your precious family that this letter remains unpublished!"

"I'll look it up at once," said DePuyster. "Until you prove your statement, I'll not notice or speak to you, Sir."

A week later an old autograph letter was shown to him at the cataloguing rooms of the auction-house. DePuyster had called every day, but it was a week before he was allowed to see it. It was to be sold as the "property of a gentleman."

With trembling hands, he examined this tomb of the secrets of the illustrious DePuyster, this time-stained document with faded writing. The letter read as follows:

Robinson's House,
September 2, 1780.

Sir:—

Everything is progressing as agreed. I have secured a pass for Hett Smith. I suppose the ordnance at West Point is the same as given. What of the military force? We have not enough to help us *on this side.* We need more

than two, a third or fourth person is required. Colonel DePuyster, in charge of the ordnance, has given me his word that he will be ready when called upon. He has already written me, giving the number of blackberries in the first field. He is of great assistance, and his name, which has always stood for honor in America, will prove a great asset to us. It is a name that is like Cæsar's wife, and has never been *suspected*. I have supplied the third help-mate; will you furnish our fourth?

I am, Sir, with great respect,
Your most obedient humble servant,
GUSTAVUS.

Maj. John Anderson.

The descendant of the gallant revolutionary soldier trembled like a coward. The name of John Anderson and Gustavus were well-known to him as those assumed by Andre and Arnold in the great conspiracy. The hand-writing was, undoubtedly, Arnold's; he had letters in his own home written by the infamous gen-

eral to Col. DePuyster, his great grandfather—letters written years before the treason—and the writing was identical.

"What—what will you take for this letter?" asked DePuyster.

"It will be sold at auction in two weeks' time," the clerk answered, politely.

"But I would like to purchase it before the sale."

"Sorry, sir, but its owner will sell only at public sale. The competition will cause it to bring a high price."

"Who is the owner?"

"I don't know."

"Can't you find out?"

"He desires to remain unknown."

"Tell him for me, that I will give any price for it before it is published in the catalogue."

"I'm sorry, sir, but Mr. Hooker also came here to examine it. He wanted to buy it. He is a great expert, you know,

and he always desired a letter of General Arnold's—about the treason. Mr. Sterling also wants it. He has a letter giving the amount Arnold received for betraying his country. It is said his letter is worth five thousand dollars. This is worth almost as much."

"I'll give him five thousand for this one."

"No, sir. You will have to wait until the sale."

Mr. Hooker sat at the club window. The feminine decorations of the Avenue did not interest him. He was thinking of poor DePuyster. Someone had just told him that DePuyster had remained indoors, not daring to show his face at the Club. He was at his apartments drinking Scotch whiskeys to take his mind away from the letter which haunted him. He could not bear to look into pedigrees and genealogies, which used to be his constant companions.

Hooker was actually sorry for the descendant of the stalwart Revolutionary hero, who dared not face his friends—much less his enemies. He would give the old man a tip! he said to himself. Anyhow it was delicious to have seen DePuyster's face when the accusation was made.

"DePuyster made me so nervous that I just *had* to do it. But I'll give him a hint. I'll write him, telling him perhaps the letter is a forgery. That will give him a chance. As a gentleman of honor, I shall write him. I should wish the proof, like his ancestors, to be "above suspicion!"

The letter was received by DePuyster, who becoming suddenly brave, faced the light of day, and made the astounding charge to the president of the auction-house that the Arnold (Gustavus) letter was nothing but a forgery! A rank imitation, a fabrication to blackmail a noble

family distinguished for three hundred years in American History!

The president grew angry; the letter had been passed upon by well-known experts, as well as their own cataloguers of autographs; it was undoubtedly genuine, and would be sold as such.

"I'll sue you for damages, if you publish that letter before it is passed upon by the greatest experts in the world."

"Go ahead and sue," said the president, turning away.

DePuyster, however, had among his numerous acquaintances, many famous lawyers, one of whom secured an injunction, preventing the sale, and impounding the letter.

It came later before the Court which, with unusual wisdom, stated that the matter should be decided by three disinterested experts, one to be selected by the Court, one by the auction-house, and one by DePuyster.

The contestants assembled in the little court-room which was crowded with friends of the parties to the suit, and eminent autograph and book-collectors. They came from many cities to hear the wrangle over the famous letter, and to witness the battle of the experts.

The name of each expert was placed in an envelope, and sealed.

"The appointment of the Court—is Robert Hooker," announced the judge, tearing to pieces the envelope.

"The expert for the defense," read the judge, tearing open another envelope, "is Robert Hooker.

"The expert that will represent the plaintiff," continued His Honor, breaking with his fingers the manila paper, "is Robert Hooker."

All eyes were turned to the corner where Robert Hooker sat unconcerned. He seemed, in a measure, overwhelmed by this new distinction.

He had been known the world over as a collector of autographs and manuscripts, but he had never been called upon as an expert.

Hooker arose. He examined the letter but for an instant.

"I have formed an opinion, Your Honor."

"So soon?"

"Yes."

"What is your decision?"

"It is a forgery!"

"Are you certain?"

"Without a shadow of a doubt!"

"Why are you so positive," queried the Judge, "when so many other authorities state that it is genuine?"

"I am positive," said Hooker, "because I wrote it myself!"

There was an uproar in the Court.

"Please explain, sir," said the judge sternly.

"DePuyster had become such a pest,

such a terror to his friends by his family anecdotes and antique stories that I could stand it no longer. I was literally bored to death. I made the charge in jest. DePuyster took it so seriously that I was compelled to supply the proof. I purchased an old sheet of writing paper with the water-mark of the Revolutionary period. I practised for hours, so I could imitate General Arnold's handwriting. When I finished the letter I almost thought it an original myself! The farce was wonderful! The hoax—a joy! I thought that I had become a Good Samaritan who had saved his friends from a very tiresome old gentleman with a hobby for family history. When my name was first called—I hesitated, but when you all selected me, I was overwhelmed with the distinguished honor. I told the truth, and spoiled a story."

"You have *created* a story!" said the judge.

"THE HUNDRED AND FIRST STORY"

THE owner did not at the time of the robbery suspect anyone. The volume had disappeared; that was all. Yesterday the famous copy of Boccaccio printed by Valdarfer in the year of grace 1471 had been one of the talked-of things in John Libro's famous library. It had reposed in its case along with its ancient companions, who in the silence of the night would relate to one another the right merry tales of Fair Jehan, of Patient Grissel, of Launcelot du Lac; and their morocco sides would shake with laughter at the quips of Giovanni Boccaccio, of Certaldo, and the rude, trenchant jests of Master Francis Rabelais. The fine old volume, which had been the envy and despair of book-lovers, had only recently

been added to the collection of Mr. Libro. In 1812 it had the proud record of selling for over £2000 and since then it had a most splendid career, having been fondled and loved by only the élite of the bibliomaniac world. Its owners had been knights, viscounts, dukes, kings, emperors,—and bibliophiles!

On the night of December 12, 1910, the "Valdarfer Boccaccio," as it had been termed, had been shown to a number of members of the "Maioli Club," a club consisting only of those interested in rare prints, books, typography, early manuscripts, and money. The volume, after having been sufficiently admired, handled, looked into, collated and gossiped over, was locked in its case by Mr. Libro, who felt a feeling of relief when the doors were shut and the key stored safely in his pocket. He did not like the rude way some of the younger and inexperienced members handled the precious

gift of the gods; and a very thoughtful and scholarly collector had the audacity and unheard of temerity to read it!

The next morning on going into the library all Mr. Libro saw was a vacancy in his favorite bookcase. Between the Dante of 1481 and the Aldine "Poliphilus" was an oblong space that had been so gloriously filled by the distinguished production of the press of Italy. The Boccaccio had vanished!

The news of its loss was flashed over the entire world. Comment on its strange disappearance was general; articles appeared in the newspapers on how to safeguard the world's great literary treasures; the *London Times* had a leading article in which it was stated that "America did not deserve to own things of inestimable artistic and intellectual value if it did not know how to preserve them."

The first thing a gentleman does when

he has been robbed is to call in a detective whose name is always a household word in novels and plays. Mr. Libro requested John Bunting to aid him with his advice, notwithstanding the fact that he had been overwhelmed with suggestions from every newspaper reporter in the United States and Canada.

At noon Bunting called. After asking the usual questions, which although a great detective, he did not disdain to do, he requested Mr. Libro to tell him the names of his guests of the night before.

"But, Mr. Bunting, I tell you I myself locked the case, put the key in my pocket, and retired. They could not possibly have extracted it in my presence, and I saw the last of them to the door."

"I would like their names."

"But I do not suspect any of them, Mr. Bunting."

"That is not so, Mr. Libro, if I may be permitted to say so. You do not care to

admit it, but you suspect someone of that Literary Club."

"I am suspicious of my best friends, but dare not indicate any one. If you want their names, I shall tell you—James Blakely, the great authority on Elizabethan Poetry; Henry Sterling, of Sterling, Petty & Co.; Robert Rodd, who knows more about the first editions of Paradise Lost than anyone; Edward Stevens; James Janney—that's five—there were six,— Oh, yes, Robert Hooker. He is quite a student but does not possess the bank account to buy all the books he wants. He would spend a million a year if he had it. He was the underbidder on the Boccaccio. Yes, Mr. Bunting, Hooker came near owning it once. I sent an unlimited bid for it at the Sunderland Sale. He tried to buy it from the bookseller who acted as my agent, when he found his own bid had not been high enough."

"Mr. Libro, that is interesting. It was no ordinary thief, however, who took it. The ordinary New Yorker does not know the difference between *that* book and one by Marie Corelli!"

Bunting began the investigation at once. He followed zealously every clew. A few notorious criminals, who were seen in the immediate vicinity of the house, were interviewed without result. One of them, who had been noticed a block from the house shortly after midnight, was locked up on suspicion. He was discharged from custody the next morning as nothing could be proved against him. This individual, who was known to the police as "Booky" Phillips, had been arrested many times, but never convicted. The Chief found him quite placid under the rapid fire of his questions. He had read of the lost Boccaccio in the *Herald,* but did not understand why any "self-re-

specting thief would stoop to steal a worthless old book!"

As a last resort Bunting was compelled to investigate the members of the Maioli Club. Although they were book-lovers the detective found, much to his surprise, that they were respectable citizens. He called one day upon Mr. Hooker without giving notice of his visit.

"Mr. Hooker," he said, "I would like to know about the book missing from the Libro collection. Do you know where it is?"

Mr. Hooker seemed to be choking. His face grew red and he could not answer for the moment. Bunting repeated the question and Hooker grew angry.

"How dare you ask me such a thing? You are so accustomed to dealing with thieves that you try your crude methods on everyone. The book will turn up sometime; meanwhile myself and all my

friends will be continually annoyed by your insults and threats. Good-day."

The detective left. He felt sure that Hooker knew more than he cared to admit. Perhaps the book was even now upon his shelves. He would have his house and office searched. This was done. The Boccaccio was nowhere to be seen.

Two years passed. The Valdarfer Boccaccio, which had been a day's wonder, was forgotten by all except Mr. Libro and Mr. Hooker. They saw each other rarely after the loss of the unlucky volume; in fact they avoided each other. The incident was never mentioned among the members of the Maioli Club—it was a thing never to be spoken of at its meetings.

It was, however, again to be the subject of talk and gossip. On December 12, 1912, two years to a day after its

strange disappearance, the volume turned up in all the glory of its illuminated page and superb morocco binding. Giovanni Boccaccio had added another story to the Hundred that composed his immortal collection.

And where had it been found? The last place in the entire world. In the New York Public Library! For almost two years it had reposed there, with no one to cherish it or dip into its witty contents. In a book-case, side by side with other great masterpieces of literature, it had remained neglected by the inhabitants of New York, who in the newspapers of that great city figure as learned and scholarly! The old story, "that the best place to *hide* a book was in a Wall Street broker's office" was found to be pleasant but fanciful fiction! It was far safer in the public library: no one would look for it there!

On the morning of the twelfth of De-

cember a gentleman came to the Inquiry Desk. He appeared to Mr. Jones, one of the assistant librarians, to be interested in books on the subject of Religion, so he requested the visitor to go with him to the book-stacks, as there were too many of them to carry to the reading tables. And theological books were always so heavy! While looking over the collection the man called Mr. Jones' attention to the label of John Libro in one of them, and asked why the "Decameron" of Boccaccio was put among the religious books? Mr. Jones blushed! He gasped, however, when he recognized the long-lost volume. He would take it at once to the principal librarian. He first asked the stranger's name,—the fortunate discoverer of the missing treasure. He gave Mr. Jones his card. Engraved thereon was "B. Phillips."

The newspapers were full of the curious recovery of the Boccaccio. Some

were quite facetious about it and went so far as to call the great building on Fifth Avenue a Literary Mausoleum. Others suggested that the State should appropriate money for the purchase of modern sex novels,—the only books that were really read! But despite the jibes and explanations the real mystery was unsolved. How was the book stolen and why?

Three days later the following letter appeared in the newspapers. It is given here because it will make a fitting ending to the Hundred and First Tale of the Decameron.

New York, December 14, 1912.

Sir:

I have read with interest the various explanations given in the papers concerning the disappearance of the book from Mr. Libro's library. I can supply the key to the whole problem.

Some two years or so ago, I was stone broke. One day I read that Mr. Libro had purchased at a great price the book which has caused all this

commotion. I thought I would lift it some night when I had nothing better to do, and sell it back to its owner or some other book crank. I called one afternoon at the Libro house with some magazines on pretence of securing subscriptions. The ruse worked. Mr. Libro ordered the *Bookman,*—a magazine I had never heard of. He showed me one or two of his books,—these maniacs always want to show you their things. I was bored to death, as you can imagine.

While he was signing the subscription blank I made a wax impression of the key to the cases. That night I did a second story job. The window was open. I easily found the library. But where was the confounded book? I looked everywhere. There semed to be millions of books. In one case I noticed a shelf that was uneven. I looked at it. I saw the name "Boccaccio." I placed the volume underneath my coat and left.

The evening papers were filled with the news. What could I do with the volume? I could not keep it in my room, as I feared the police would find

it. I did not dream that it would be missed so soon, and I did not anticipate all this fuss over a shabby old book. I tried to think of a place to hide it, but could not. One of the papers said that a Richard Hooker was the other crank who had bid for it at the auction sale. If I went to him now he would refuse to buy it and arrest me.

I tried another and surer course. That night I went to Hooker's house,—another second story job—and left the cursed book in the most conspicuous place in the library. The next day I called on him. I said I was Mr. Scott,—a detective. I accused him of stealing the book from Mr. Libro. He said I lied. I told him he had the book in his house now. From the expression on his face I knew I had him. He said he had found the book in his library, but had not taken it and did not know how it had got there. I asked him if he thought anyone would believe him. He said—No! Everyone would think he had stolen it. Hooker offered me a thousand dollars to take the book and say nothing. I accepted two thou-

sand dollars in cash. I took the book, but where to hide it I did not know. It was under my coat when I was passing 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue. A thought struck me. I would place it where it would never be found. The people here have no time to read books; it was the best place of all. In a moment I was in the library; I threw the cursed old thing on one of the shelves. I left in great glee.

At the corner of 40th Street and the Avenue I was arrested by one of Captain Bunting's men. They tried to get something on me, but could not. I was innocent!

I am on my way to London to visit the British Museum, for I find the study of books profitable.

Yours very truly,

B. PHILLIPS.

THE LADY OF THE BREVIARY

THE Abelard Missal was lost to him forever.

When Mr. Richard Blaythwaite was alive, Robert Hooker had a small chance, one in ten thousand perhaps, of securing it and adding this beautiful memento of the Renaissance to his "museum of the imagination." But now that Blaythwaite was dead, all hope of owning it had vanished.

Hooker would not have hesitated, in the cause of the public, to have taken it by fair means or foul from Blaythwaite, but he would not rob a woman. He was singularly squeamish upon this point.

Richard Blaythwaite had left everything to his only daughter, including the famous Abelard missal.

It was a marvelous manuscript dating from the sixteenth century, and contained at the end the beautiful and tragic story of those mediæval lovers, Abelard and Heloise.

The pictures that decorated the missal, however, were its chief glory. . . . They were the work of Giulio Clovio, and executed by the great miniaturist for Philip the Second of Spain. The full page illuminations, with the exquisite colors, heightened with gold, were worth a king's ransom, or a queen's reputation. The binding was in keeping with the superb quality of the breviary, being in old purple morocco, the royal arms of Castile impressed in gold upon the sides.

Hooker tried in every way but could not give up the idea of being its possessor. It haunted him at night, and during the day his mind constantly reverted to its matchless colors and quaint designs.

He knew Miss Blaythwaite slightly,

having met her in former days at her father's house, when he used to delight in looking over his famous library. The pity of it all was that the missal was to be in the keeping of a woman. If it had gone to some collector who would treasure it as a delectable gift of the gods, it would not be so bad. But to a woman! The thought almost drove him mad.

One evening, in despair, he resolved to call at the fine old house, and glance once more at the lovely picture of Abelard imprinting his last kiss upon the lips of Heloise.

He felt some misgivings, when he was told that Miss Blaythwaite was at home and would see him. He almost hated her, and he could not forbear the thought that the Abelard missal was no more to her than her pet dog, or the bracelet upon her fair wrist.

When she entered the room, he was taken aback. When he saw her some

years ago, she was but a slip of a girl, with long hair down her back. She was now tall and stately, with beautiful deep blue eyes. She was dressed simply; and Hooker thought exceedingly well, but he was not a judge. He knew more about the morocco covering of an old book than a lady's apparel.

"Good evening, Mr. Hooker. I'm glad you called," she said.

"Thank you, Miss Blaythwaite. It's been a long time since I've had the pleasure of seeing you."

"Yes, you've rather neglected us lately. Are you still interested in books? Poor father had quite a mania for them."

"That's what first brought me to the house. Do you remember how we used to spend hours going over his books?"

"Hours? It seemed ages to mother and me. Poor mother, how furious she used to be when father brought those dusty old books into the house. She used to

say that father threw away his money on them. He'd give a hundred dollars for a shabby old thing, when he could have bought a nice, modern edition for five."

At this, Robert Hooker was speechless!

"I suppose you would like to see some of the additions to the library," Miss Blaythwaite continued, "father bought books until he died. You know he caught pneumonia by going to an auction-sale, one cold day last winter. This is the book he bought,—but at what a cost!"

She took from the shelves which lined the walls, a small volume. It was a copy of Shakespeare's Sonnets, the first edition; published in 1609.

"And the strange part of it all, Mr. Hooker, I believe in my heart that papa never regretted its purchase."

Hooker was about to remark that it was worth the risk, but checked himself in time.

"It *was* foolish. Your father, however, was a true bibliophile."

Miss Blaythwaite returned this volume of volumes to its position in the case, and when Hooker saw it, he turned pale. She had put it in upside down—a terrible thing to do. One would have to stand upon his head to read the title, and book-lovers do not believe in gymnastics.

He immediately placed it in its proper position, carefully, tenderly—as if it had been a baby, which was precious to him, but not quite so precious as an old book or manuscript!

"Father could not bear us to put books in upside down, but mother and I would often forget, and the way father scolded, you would think we had committed a horrid crime."

At this, they both laughed.

When Hooker was shown the breviary, he lingered for a long time over its magic pages. He felt the cool vellum leaves

with his fingers, for fear lest the missal would slip through his hand, and disappear forever!

For over two months, Hooker was a constant visitor at the Blaythwaite home. He became intimately acquainted with every book in the library; he could tell the exact date of publication of the early printed volumes; the place where it was printed; the name of the binder, and other useless information.

Even Miss Blaythwaite caught some of the contagion. She, who had formerly cared nothing for her father's "playthings," became interested in them. Sometimes she would take down from a shelf a volume of old English poetry, and become absorbed in the lyrical sweetness of the verse. Occasionally, she would read aloud to Hooker some beautiful poems that she had discovered in Ben Jonson, in Crashaw, or in Herrick; and he would tell her of his aspirations, and of

the Museum that existed only in his mind. He told her of the wonderful things he already possessed.

Although Hooker had known Miss Blaythwaite for some time, she was to him always, the Lady of the Breviary.

When he felt the delicious warmth of her hand, he thought of the missal; when she was seated near him, poring over some old volume of forgotten lore, his mind turned to its wonderful binding, or its miraculous miniatures. Strange as it may seem, Miss Blaythwaite was nothing more to him than the guardian and sole owner of a book that his soul desired. Sometimes, when they were reading together some volume of Elizabethan verse, another caller would be announced; Hooker would be presented, and then he would retire gracefully to her father's library, leaving the field clear to his rival. This, of course, was not flattering to Miss Blaythwaite!

One night, Jack Worthing was there before him. He was a clean-cut, manly fellow, interested first in sports, and after that in business. He had known Miss Blaythwaite for years. The talk turned, as it will always turn, when bibliophiles are present, upon books.

"I don't understand you fellows," said Worthing. "You think more of an old book than many people of their children!"

"Of course! Children often grow up into ill-mannered youths and conceited young ladies. Books always remain young and delightful!"

"But, confound it! You never read them. You have thousands around you all the time, and I bet you don't read ten a year."

"Rare books are meant to be carefully nurtured during our lives, and passed on after our death to those who will appreciate them. Only college professors, stu-

dents, scholars, and such people ever *read* books," answered Hooker, contemptuously.

"I think book-men the most foolish class of persons on earth," retorted Worthing. "Give me some good old sport, like boxing, or foot-ball, that makes you heart tingle, that causes the red blood to shoot through your veins—*that* makes life worth living! Man wasn't created to spend his life roaming around a dusky old library, when he can go out into God's pure air and enjoy the fields and the streams, the forests and the lakes!"

At this, Miss Blaythwaite seemed to smile approvingly.

Hooker said nothing. Bibliophiles are not missionaries. They do not go into the by-ways of the world to uphold their creeds, for the love of books is such a wonderful thing that it can never be explained!

When he left Miss Blaythwaite that

night, he felt that the breviary was farther from him than ever.

Hooker, however, came swiftly to a decision.

The only way he could obtain the Abelard Missal, was by marrying Miss Blaythwaite. The next evening he called, with this firmly fixed in his mind. This wily, calculating book-worm had slowly crept into her affections. He knew she liked him, but would she marry him?

He asked her with great fervor, which was assumed, whether she would become his wife. He waited breathlessly for her answer.

"I want to be frank with you, Robert," she said. "I do not think you love me."

"How can you say such a thing?"

"Instinctively, I feel it. I like you, but I cannot marry you."

"Why not? Is there someone else?"

Miss Blaythwaite smiled.

"Yes."

"I never dreamed of it. Of course I might have known."

"You do know, Robert."

"Is it Jack Worthing?"

"No."

"Then, who is it?"

"It's that old missal. You are more in love with *that,* than you are with me. I can see it in your eyes, in your talk, in everything. If I were not its owner, you would never come near me."

"Then you will not marry me?"

"No, I cannot. Do you know, Robert, I've become actually jealous of that breviary, and intend to present it to some library or museum! It ought, by right, to go to the Metropolitan."

"For God's sake," Hooker cried in mortal anguish, "do anything but that!"

For over six months the forlorn bibliophile remained away from the Lady of the

Breviary. Somehow or other, it was not the missal which was foremost in his thoughts. His books, his autographs, his porcelains, his engravings had no longer the charm they once had. He no longer took an interest in the auction-sales, and the catalogues that came to him would lie neglected upon his desk.

He looked with particular distaste upon the "Three Trees" and the "Unpublishable Memoirs" and the Shakespeare-Bacon volume. He even thought of returning them to their owners! The great institute to be founded and called after his name, was a thing of the past! He had acted like a cad, he said to himself. To marry a woman for an old book was almost as bad as marrying for money!

One evening, Hooker came to the conclusion that he could not stand this loneliness, this desolation, any longer. He intended to leave the country, to wander in

foreign lands! He would call again upon Miss Blaythwaite for the last time, but would she receive him?

His heart was beating rapidly when the maid told him she was in, and would see him.

And there was Jack Worthing with her, looking big and manly, and courageous as ever!

Miss Blaythwaite seemed delighted to see him. A sudden joy seemed to overspread her features! And Hooker noticed things about her he had never noticed before. He saw the appealing dimples in her cheeks—the fine hair blowing near the temples—the exquisite shape of her ears—the wonderful turquoise-blue of her eyes!

And Jack Worthing was talking of books! A miracle had happened! Somehow or other, Miss Blaythwaite seemed to take a decided interest in the library left her by her father, and during the last half

of the year, she was continually speaking to Worthing of first editions and Caxtons; of Elzevirs and typography; of Americana, incunabula and such ridiculous things, and all in a jargon that was quite unintelligible to him. And Worthing determined to study the things she liked, and borrowed some reference-books from a library that told of the mysteries of the book-lovers' cult. And when Hooker heard Worthing speak of the rare first edition of Poe's Tamerlane, he almost fainted with surprise!

"Don't you want to look over father's books, Mr. Hooker," asked Miss Blaythwaite. "You may go in the library as usual, and make yourself at home. I have added a few things myself!"

"No, thank you, I'd rather remain here. Which side do you think will win the polo match to-morrow? Meadowbrook?"

At this, Miss Blaythwaite and Worthing looked at each other in astonishment.

Hooker thought he saw a mysterious understanding between them. He became at once insanely jealous of the athletic young man who was discoursing so eloquently of Tamerlane "in boards, uncut."

"Meadowbrook?" persisted Hooker.

"I suppose so," returned Worthing, in an uninterested manner.

Yes, this talk of books had become decidedly distasteful to the once enthusiastic bibliophile.

"By the way, Mr. Hooker," said Miss Blaythwaite, "I've made up my mind about the Abelard missal. Jack and I think it would be a good thing to give it to the Metropolitan Museum."

"I quite agree with you, Miss Blaythwaite," said poor Hooker. "There it would always be safe from fire, and could be seen by the public. It is certainly the proper thing to do."

At this, Miss Blaythwaite seemed overjoyed.

When Worthing left, after an interminable time, Robert Hooker sat by her side upon the old Chippendale sofa in her father's library. When she discoursed of books and learning, he would quietly change the subject.

He wanted to hear about herself, and what she had been doing since he saw her last. As for himself—he was going away. He was taking a steamer next Saturday for Europe.

She asked him quietly if he did not want to take a last look at the breviary.

"Damn the breviary!" he said to himself. He did not care particularly about it, but she insisted.

He took the precious volume from its place on the shelf, and together they looked at the marvelous illustrations that traced so vividly the history of the two devoted lovers.

They glanced not at the calendar, or the litany that came first in the breviary,

but bent their heads over the lovely miniatures that narrated so touchingly the tragic story.

When they came to the picture showing the final parting of Abelard from his beloved Heloise, Hooker looked at Miss Blaythwaite.

Her eyes were filled with tears.

"Robert," she said tenderly, "I'm not going to present it to the Metropolitan. I'll give it to the Hooker Museum! Then—we *both* can always enjoy it."

THE EVASIVE PAMPHLET

HE was disappointed again!

He sat alone in his office thinking of the auction sale of the day before. A copy of the rare first edition of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," the immortal story of Edgar Allan Poe, was lost to him and his heirs for ever more.

He had gone to the auction with the virtuous intention of buying it; when the shabby little pamphlet with its brown paper wrappings—printed in Philadelphia in 1843—was offered, the bidding was remarkably spirited. It was finally sold to a distinguished collector for thirty-eight hundred dollars. He had been the underbidder, but what chance had a poor devil of a bibliophile against the wealthy captains of industry? At sales of this

character the race is not to the swift, but to the—rich!

Robert Hooker had once owned a copy of this precious volume. This made his disappointment the keener. It was a more interesting example than the one that had just been offered under the hammer of the auctioneer, for it had been a presentation copy with a simple though beautiful inscription written in the delicate handwriting of the poet upon the title-page:

"To Virginia from E. A. P."

This was the very copy the greatest of story-tellers had lovingly given to his wife. Years ago it had mysteriously disappeared from Hooker's office, where he had kept it in a fire-proof, feeling it was more secure there than on the shelves of his library. He sought for it everywhere, offering large rewards for its return, but the evasive little volume never was heard of again.

Hooker was musing over his "defeat" of yesterday in the salesroom when his thoughts reverted to the fate of his own copy. Where was it? What was its history? Its possessor could not seek a purchaser, because the inscription on the title-page would instantly identify it. Had it been destroyed? Was it—

"A gentleman to see you, sir, about an old book!"

He instantly awoke from his reverie. It was his secretary who had spoken.

"Tell him I have no money for such things!" said Hooker.

John Lawrence, his secretary, did not turn away, but waited with the flicker of a smile upon his face. He knew the foibles of his employer. He had been with him for many years. And a really good clerk always knows his master's weaknesses.

"Hold on a minute, John. Perhaps I

can give him a few minutes. Tell him to come in."

"Hello, Colonel! What can I do for you this morning?" said Hooker cheerily, to a middle-aged man, erect of figure, who had just entered. He was one of those men who make their living picking up old books, old guns, old papers, old coins, old pictures, old everything. He also, at times, had a faculty of picking up old liquors, which was not good for him. He was known as the "Colonel" because of his military bearing and his interest in the Civil War. He had really been a soldier serving in the glorious and extensive regiment known as the home guard.

"Good morning, Mr. Hooker. I've a matter I'd like to speak to you about—but in the strictest confidence. I'm on the track of a really fine book."

At this Hooker smiled. Although in his long and busy life and in his strange

wanderings the Colonel had secured a few good things his "finds" generally turned out to be of no value. Hooker had frequently advanced him money to purchase what the Colonel termed "nuggets," but when they were brought to him changed, in the twinkling of an eye, into fool's gold.

"Well, what is it?" said Hooker, rather impatiently, fearing another tug at his purse-strings.

"You've read this morning's papers? The 'Murders in the Rue Morgue' brought at the sale yesterday thirty-eight hundred dol—"

"Enough of that!" retorted Hooker, who was becoming angry. "I never want to hear of that damned book again!"

"But I know where there's another copy," presented the Colonel, weakly.

"So do I. In the British Museum!"

"No, Mr. Hooker. Right here in New York."

"Where?"

"But you're not interested, you just said—"

"Of course I am, you old fool, go on!"

"Well, the book's in an old house down near Washington Square. It'll be difficult to get. Its owner's in jail."

"In *jail!*"

"Yes. He's serving a stretch—twenty years."

"What for?"

"Murder!"

"Now, Colonel, I hope you didn't come here to amuse me with fairy tales. I'm very busy this morning."

"No. That's straight. He's up for twenty years. He murdered his sweetheart. The court brought in a verdict of manslaughter, so he got a light sentence."

"Well, what's that got to do with the book?"

"Have patience, Mr. Hooker. You know of the Tomlinson case?"

"Never heard of it."

"Impossible, sir! The newspapers were filled with it at the time. Seven years ago every one was talking about it and surely you remember—"

"No, Colonel, seven years ago I was in Europe. Tell me about it."

The Colonel went into details—

In June of 1907 a family by the name of Clarke moved into two rooms in a large, old fashioned residence on Eighth Street, near Fifth Avenue. They were there for less than a month when they gave the landlord notice. They could not remain in the house on account of ghosts! Now *everyone* believes in ghosts but landlords. It injures their business.

The Clarkes contended that every night in the front room the most mysterious noises were heard; they called in the janitor, but he knew nothing. The strange sounds continued; they were uncanny, inexplicable. The Clarkes moved out and

they were succeeded by other nervous and hysterical persons. The landlord in desperation reduced the rent, but still the tenants would not remain.

At last even he, who was sceptical and would not believe in hobgoblins, or ghosts, or spirits, or any of those fantastic creatures that exist outside the material mind, resolved to investigate for himself. He literally camped in the rooms for months and heard not a sound! Every night he determined would be his last and that he would not waste any more of his valuable time over the mystical phantoms of his foolish tenants.

One evening, which he resolved was to be the final one, while he was playing solitaire to pass the tedium of the vigil, he heard a noise in the wall. He turned pale with fear. A cold chill ran up and down his back. A moment later the sound of a falling coin reached his ears and there rolled toward him from the old

Georgian fire-place a shining object.

It was a few minutes before he had the courage to pick it up. It was a small gold ring. He examined it carefully and engraved therein were the initials "M. P. from J. L." He put the ring in his pocket, removed the fire dogs, the tongs, the coal-scuttle and the whole paraphernalia of fire-places and looked up the flue. He could see nothing. Although it was a clear night he could not see the stars. Something was in the way. . . . . .

The finding next day of the poor, bruised body of little Marie Perrin up the chimney of "No. 8" was the sensation of the hour. A horrible crime had been committed, and in an unknown and terrible way. It was Edgar Allan Poe in a new guise and his wonderful stories immediately became popular and new editions of the "Tales" were called for by a new set of readers. Some critics of crime suggested that the "Murders in the Rue

Morgue" had been repeated at No. Eight East Eighth Street. The hiding-place of the body was identical with that in the famous story and it was said that the police were on the look-out for apes, gorillas, and other animals, which alone were capable of committing such hideous crimes.

The whole life of poor little Marie was laid bare. Her picture was in every newspaper and her history was given from the day of her birth with remarkable ingenuity. The reporters, with uncontrolled imaginations, turned out from the scanty material at their hands an excellent biographical sketch, that seemed and rang true, which is sufficient for the reading public.

Marie Perrin had disappeared without paying her rent from No. Eight over a year ago. When the agent came to collect the arrears, he found the tenant had departed with all her chattels. This was

a libel, for she was in the room but not visible. The detectives, when they investigated into the tragedy and after asking ten thousand questions in a thousand and one places, found out that Marie had a sweetheart and that his name was Richard Tomlinson. He refused to admit his guilt, but after being prodded with the iron-fork of the law, technically known as the "third degree" he broke down and confessed. In a fit of anger he struck her over the head with the brass fire-tongs. He had no intention of killing her, or even harming her, but he had become insanely jealous of another who was paying her attentions. In fact he said he must have been mad at the time, as he did not remember having struck her until she lay before him, quiet and cold upon the floor.

After a trial lasting over two weeks, and full of sensational incidents, Tomlinson was sentenced to spend twenty years of his life in prison.

"That's an interesting tale," said Robert Hooker, when the Colonel had stopped speaking, "but what has all this to do with the first edition of Poe's story?"

"Well, you see, Tomlinson was a friend of mine. He told me that, after he had accidentally killed the girl, he was terribly frightened. He did not know what to do with the body. He had a mind to go to the police and confess all, but did not have the courage to do so. He remained in a trance, he thought, for hours, thinking of his fearful crime and the dreadful consequences. While he was in this deep, agonizing study and not knowing what he was doing, he picked up a small book on her reading table. It was 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue.' It was the title that attracted him, and some compelling force, what it was he knew not, caused him to read it. He told me that never in his whole life had anything so interested him as that story on that

frightful occasion; although pursued by terrible fears he read every word, every syllable of it. The rest you know."

"But, Colonel," said Hooker, with one thought uppermost in his mind, "it might be *any* edition, not necessarily the first. There have been hundreds of editions published. How do you know what edition it was?"

"It *was* the first, Mr. Hooker. Tomlinson told me the girl had borrowed it to read and that it belonged to some one who had a mania for old books and who had kept it always under lock and key."

"Do you know where it is?"

"Yes."

"Can you get it?"

"Perhaps."

"I shall make it worth your while. How much do you want?"

"All I can get. I'll have to *steal* it!"

"What!"

"Yes, I'll have to steal it. It cannot be

had in any other way. Why do you start?"

"I didn't think you'd have to do *that!*"

"Yes. You see Tomlinson, when he moved from those furnished rooms, took everything he could carry to his brother's lodgings near Washington Square. The book is in a sealed trunk on the third floor. Tomlinson made his brother promise that this trunk was not to be disturbed under any circumstances until he came out of jail a free man. I've tried in every way —by bribery and everything—but his brother will not touch it. He seems afraid of that old trunk. I'll get it, however, at all costs. Are you with me?"

Hooker was, above everything, a true bibliophile. He instantly answered:

"Yes, Colonel! Go the limit. I'll back you."

The Colonel without another word picked up his hat and left the office.

For three tedious weeks Hooker heard

no more of the book or of his curious friend, the Colonel. The whole thing seemed like a tale woven by Poe himself.

Would the book, if it ever was secured, turn out to be a second edition and worthless? Booklovers, after the strange manner of their kind, only cherish the first, the earliest issue, in the same state as it came from the master's hand, unrevised and with all the errors uncorrected. They do not care for new and more elegant editions. Hooker grew restless as the weeks rolled by, and still no Colonel.

One morning, as he was looking over his mail, a gentleman was announced. Then, tottering into the office, with his arm in a sling and a patch over his left eye, came the gallant Colonel.

"Why, Colonel, what's the matter?"

"Nothing at all, sir."

"But your arm and your—"

"That's my affair, Mr. Hooker. I've come to secure the reward of my labors.

I've got the book," he said in triumph,—"I told you I'd get it."

"Where is it?"

"Here in my pocket. Look at it. It's a superb copy!"

The Colonel laid before the astonished eyes of Richard Hooker the priceless first edition of Poe's marvelous story. It was in the original brown printed wrappers, just as it was published. With trembling hands he grasped the book; he turned the first page and gasped. A startled cry broke from his lips. The Colonel at once noticed his pallor. He did not dream that an old book would affect even the most ardent bibliophile in this manner. In all his experience of forty years he had never seen anyone so overcome at the sight of a dingy pamphlet.

There, upon the title-page, Hooker read the tender inscription written many generations ago, with which the most imaginative of American poets had pre-

sented his greatest story to his loving wife. It was his own copy, returned like bread upon the waters. Hooker was speechless. He went over to his check book and handed the Colonel the equivalent of three thousand dollars. The Colonel retired, murmuring his thanks.

The book lay upon Hooker's desk. Here was a new problem, worthy of M. Dupin himself. Question after question came into his excited mind to depart unanswered. Who had stolen it? and how? Why had it been taken? How had Tomlinson secured it? and what, above all, had it to do with Marie Perrin?

Hooker remained there, gazing at the pamphlet for hours. It fascinated him horribly. The luncheon hour went by and still he sat staring intently at its faded covers. Would he ever solve the riddle?

His mind was still at work on the problem when he was interrupted by his secretary.

"It's closing time, sir. Is there anything you want before I go?"

"Nothing, John, thank you."

The secretary turned to depart! He drew back suddenly.

"The book! Mr. Hooker, the book! Where did you get *that!*"

Robert Hooker looked at his confidential assistant. His face was the color of the whitest parchment. His breath came in gasps and cold drops of perspiration were visible upon his forehead.

"I bought it to-day," said Hooker, quietly. "It once belonged to me—and Marie Perrin."

"She was my—"

John Lawrence did not finish the sentence; his face was twitching and he was evidently suffering from the keenest nervous excitement.

"Tell me about it, John," said Hooker kindly. "You seem to know something of it."

"I do, Mr. Hooker. You'll forgive me, won't you? I didn't mean to do anything wrong."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"Well, years ago, on your return from Europe, you questioned me about that book. I was the only one who had access to the safe and knew the combination. I told you I knew nothing about it—that perhaps it had been mislaid before your departure for London. I lied, for I had taken it. I'd no intention of stealing it; I did not even know it was particularly valuable. I read the story one day when I was alone, with no work to do. It was the best tale I'd ever read. I was absorbed by it. I could not get the horrible plot out of my head."

"Yes, John, go on. Where does Marie come in?"

"I was engaged to her. I had known her for years. She came from Montpelier, Vermont, where we both were

born. One day I told her of the story. She wanted to read it. Not thinking it any harm, I loaned it to her. She stopped for it one evening on her way home. I never saw her after that. I tried every way to find her, without avail. She had disappeared from her rooms on Eighth Street and I never heard of her again until the frightful news came out. Detectives came to see me. My name was in the papers once or twice at the time, and the questions they asked me were terrible. I proved an alibi; they had fixed the crime on Tomlinson, who, unknown to me, was uppermost in her affections. It was a bitter awakening. I've never been the same since. I think of her every night of my life—I've now told you all and I shall resign and leave you at once. You can have no more need of me."

"Stay, John. I forgive you. You've

suffered enough. Go home—and come down to-morrow, as usual."

The book still lay upon the desk. This time he would take it home to keep it in his library among his most valuable possessions. For surely it was the most interesting copy of the "Murders in the Rue Morgue" in existence! Hooker turned the leaves to see whether, after its wanderings, all the pages were intact—"collating" it, as bibliophiles love to term this delightful occupation. Yes, it was perfect—just as when it had so mysteriously disappeared years ago. But, hold,—what were the brown, reddish finger-marks on the back cover? Hooker did not have to be told that it was the life-blood of poor Marie Perrin.

THE GREAT DISCOVERY

HE was considered by all his friends thrice a fool. First, he was engaged to be married; second, he was a speculator in stocks; and third, he was a book-lover. Some condoned the first offence, others pardoned the second, which was considered a weakness, and all universally condemned the last!

John Libro had money on July 28th, 1914. On July 29 he did not possess a cent. The War caused it all. When New Haven dropped to fifty and Reading to seventy, John Libro's fortune shrank with them and he was left high and dry with nothing but the advice of his friends, a little jewelry, some clothing, and a few old books!

Libro went home, made an inventory,

and counted the change in his pocket. He was thirty-five years old, big, healthy, good-natured, and irrepressible. Here he was face to face with starvation. He grimly smiled, for it was at any rate a new experience. He sat down by the little bookcase, forgot his cares and his creditors, and took out his beloved friends. He tenderly fondled the first edition of Elia, dipped into Beaumont and Fletcher, and took solace from the "Pleasures of Memory." When he looked at his watch, it was eight o'clock. Two hours had glided away in the company of his morocco-clad companions.

It was then that he thought of Ethel. He would go to her at once and unfold his story. He told her in a few words that he was ruined and could not marry her. This made her more than ever determined to marry *him*. She loved him and could not allow such a small thing as money to interfere with their plans. The more he

insisted, the more determined she became. At last they reached a compromise—he would put the matter squarely up to her father. Mr. Edwards was called from his study.

"Mr. Edwards," he began, "I suppose you read of what happened to-day in the stock-market—"

"Yes, yes, of course," Mr. Edwards replied quickly, "what of it?"

"Well, I was long on New Haven and Reading—"

"Speculating again, have you?"

"Yes, and I'm broke, and Ethel would not allow me to break off the engagement until I spoke to you."

"She is a foolish girl. You are released, and I think it a good thing for my daughter."

"Perhaps some day when I go to work—" poor Libro pleaded.

"Work! Work!" retorted Mr. Ed-

wards, "who ever heard of a stock broker who *worked!*"

Without another word they parted—and Libro returned to the drawing-room to pay, with many kisses, his farewell to Ethel.

When at last he was on the street he thought that poverty was the most terrible thing in the world—it destroyed in a moment love and happiness. And yet he was no longer thrice a fool—for he was *not* engaged, he was no longer a speculator, and, of course, he must cease to be a collector. While he was meditating about this curious effect of poverty, which had changed over night a fool into a philosopher, a beggar approached him. He felt in his pockets and handed him a quarter. Libro then went on his way, for the humor of the incident appealed to him.

The next day he tried to secure a position. He asked all his friends, who could do nothing "on account of the war."

He then tried the department stores, the banks, the hotels, the theatres—everywhere. No one would give a position to a stock-broker. Mr. Edwards was right!

But he must live—the situation had become not so fantastic. He would sell everything—his father's watch, his jewelry, his clothing, everything but his books. Those he would not part with.

On the corner of Thirty-fifth and Broadway was a pawnshop—he had passed it hundreds of times, but had never thought of entering. Half of it was a store where the pledges were sold; each piece of jewelry had a huge white card on which ran some such legend—"Former price $1,000—now $400." The other half of the shop was where the real "business" was conducted, and it was here that its patrons lost their patrimony. Libro was ashamed to enter; he hesitated two or three times and then returned to his rooms. He picked up old "Omar" in its paper

covers, and with the imprint of Bernard Quaritch, 1859, for it was a first edition and much beloved. He then read of wines and the joys of heaven—he could not afford to buy those full orient vintages, but, nevertheless, in the quietude of his rooms, he drank deep.

Two days later, with the courage of hunger, Libro visited the locality of this American Mont de Piété. But he was again afraid to enter. He seemed to see all his friends near him, watching him. He thought they smiled when they acknowledged his trembling salute. Broadway seemed to contain myriads of his acquaintances. He then thought with dread of the interior of the place, with its poor, degraded, perhaps half-clothed men and women, forced to pledge their last precious possession. He walked away, but returned, laughing at his cowardice. This was also to be a new experience. He resolved to walk quickly up to the door

and enter before anyone would notice him.

He received a shock when he passed the portals. If he observed acquaintances on the outside, here on the inside, he met *friends!* All Wall Street seemed to be gathered. It was more like a meeting of the Down Town Club. "Hello, Jack! Why, if that's not Libro!" and "The Baby Member!" greeted him from all sides. Before the well-worn counter was the flower of New York's financial set, pawning their diamonds and their good-repute. The wire houses and the bucket shops and the legitimate offices were all closed, and, by a marvelous change, as in the twinkling of an eye, the principals, and not their customers, were putting up "more margin!"

John Libro entered properly into the spirit of the occasion. He laughed with the others when one received $50 on a diamond ring that cost two hundred. He

roared in harmony with the crowd when one well known Broadway habitué objected to the twelve dollars proffered on a gold watch. It was all too funny for anything! It was now his turn. He felt sick as he took from his tie an emerald pin, the gift of his mother.

"How much do you want on this?" asked the proprietor. It was a cold voice which went through him like steel. He took an instant dislike to this man who was the proprietor himself, Geoffrey Steinman, a king among his brethren of this old and honorable profession.

"Seventy-five dollars," said Libro.

"This is no time for jokes," Steinman retorted. "I shall advance you fifteen dollars, and not a cent more."

"But it cost a hundred at Tiffany's!"

"Fifteen dollars—my time is valuable."

It was the same old story. John Libro received the money and departed. He was bitter at the world and particularly

at the cold, keen gentleman who presided over the destinies of the shop with the glittering windows. He grew bitter when his watch (his father's gift), his fob, his gold card-case, his medals and finally his overcoat went into the tiger's maw. And every time he remonstrated with him, cursed him, or implored him, Steinman remained the same—heartless, brusque, cutting, satirical and, what was worse than all, polite. "Damn his politeness," gasped Libro—"I can do nothing at all with him when he is polite!"

This hate ripened and broke out anew when each article was pawned. "If I could only get even"—he exclaimed hopelessly. He had not a chance in the world, he thought. For a thousand times he said goodby to a dear memento of his parents or a remembrance of his youth. At last he had pledged everything.

Libro had not heard from Ethel for months, although it seemed like ages to

him! On the cold afternoon that he had pawned his overcoat he went to his rooms and thought if it would not be better to end it all, quietly and decently. He thought for a long time. He went to the little bookcase and picked up an old edition of Boethius on the "Consolations of Philosophy," and only the title consoled him. He, however, found many long-tried friends, and their broad margins and blue and crimson morocco covers made him forget that man was made to mourn. His first editions of the poets made him oblivious to his condition and he lived once again on high Parnassus.

Libro was looking over the Poems of John Keats, published in 1817, when a catalogue slip fell out. On the slip it stated that a copy had once sold for five hundred dollars! This, then, was meat and drink for him! He would sell it! He could live for months on poor Keats. But his soul revolted. He was not a can-

nibal. He could not live off the flesh of his own.

But at last he was compelled to return to Steinman. He wrapped up the precious volume tenderly, affectionately. He took it bravely, for was he not offering at the sacrifice the dearest of his possessions? He gently, timidly, unwrapt before the pawnbroker the little volume, awaiting expectantly the admiration that always followed its appearance. But, alas, he was not among book-lovers.

"No books!" exclaimed Steinman. "I've got stuck on them once or twice before. Not one cent!"

"You,—you—" but Libro could not find words to explain his hatred. He would have killed him had he a weapon near.

"Don't you know that book has sold for five hundred dollars at auction," exclaimed Libro.

"Then *sell* it at auction," replied Stein-

man, politely. As the poor and crushed bibliophile turned to go, the proprietor interrupted him.

"Wait. If you are so interested in that old plunder, perhaps you would like to see this."

Steinman held in his hands a dingy old volume. Libro could not resist. An unknown force compelled him to look at it. With hatred consuming him, he nevertheless, like a true bibliophile, received from his enemy the book. He opened it.

"Why, they are Shakespeare quartos!" he almost shouted, and then stopped suddenly.

The proprietor was looking at him narrowly. Libro's heart had almost stopped beating. There was the long lost quarto of "Titus Andronicus," 1594, and a perfect first edition of "Hamlet!" There were others in the volume, a veritable treasure trove. It was, in truth, a great discovery!

"What's it worth?" said Steinman.

"Something to a collector," replied Libro, honestly: "nothing to you."

"Well, if you know anyone who wants the old thing he can have it for ten dollars. I once advanced that amount on it. Since then I say, No Books!"

John Libro by a superhuman effort controlled himself.

"Steinman, I need money for food. You already have everything valuable I possess,—but this."

He took from his finger a ring. It had been his mother's wedding ring. It was the last that remained to him of his parents' legacy.

"How much will you give me on this?" he said, trembling. His very life depended upon Steinman's answer. He held his breath.

"A little less than gold-value," said Steinman. He threw it carelessly on the scales.

"Ten dollars and thirty-seven cents."

Without further ado Steinman counted out the money and Libro departed. He, however, went out one door and came in by another. It was the first time that he had entered the half of the establishment where the unredeemed merchandise is sold. On this side he was a patron and not to be patronized.

"How much for that old book?" said Libro boldly.

"Ten dollars," answered Steinman in a surprised tone. This was a new dodge, a customer pledging one article to obtain money to purchase another!

It was Libro's turn now; but he was not used to the game. "I shall give you five dollars. Not a cent more."

"No. Ten dollars or nothing."

"All right. I'll take it; wrap it up."

He counted out the money and left. Steinman felt uneasy. He thought he saw the flicker of an unholy smile on

Libro's face, as he passed through the swinging doors.

It is almost unnecessary to state that Libro sold the book—the only book he ever parted with—for a fabulous sum—more than its weight in gold,—and for many thousands of dollars. A noted collector purchased it immediately, and it is now the chief attraction of his wonderful library.

With the money jingling in his pocket he returned to the scene of his former misery. He was to redeem his pledges with the broker's own money.

"Steinman," he said, "collect all my things. I shall pay what I owe and take them with me."

"I congratulate you, Mr. Libro, on your return to fortune," replied Steinman affably.

"I want to thank you, Steinman."

"Thank me! Why?"

"Because of the old book," said Libro,

politely. "I sold it to-day for thirty thousand dollars!"

In a joyous mood John Libro called upon Ethel Edwards. The story of "the Shakespeare Find" was in the evening's papers. No one was more glad to see him than Ethel's father, who welcomed him like an old friend. That night he mused as he walked home: "I am no longer a stock-broker, I am engaged to Ethel, and I can still collect books. I *am* a fool; and I glory in it!"

THE FIFTEEN JOYS OF MARRIAGE

HE was showing the distinguished guest through his magnificent library. He exhibited with pride his treasures, telling an interesting tale about this volume, and his merry adventures about that. In glass-covered exhibition cases were displayed some of his greater rarities and the colors of their morocco coverings gleamed and glowed in the light. At one end of the spacious room was a case with bronze mountings, and within reposed a volume bound in old olive levant, powdered with the bees and other devices so often used by Nicolas Eve, binder to his Majesty Francis the First. The visitor asked about the volume that was so superbly housed, and

begged Mr. Henry Stirling to give its history.

"Pray examine it," he replied, taking the volume with the greatest care from the case. On its back, in letters of gold, mellowed by age, was its title: "Les Quinze Joyes de Mariage." "Ah, that is indeed rare!" exclaimed the visitor, "and its binding is marvelous. But hold, it is rubbed in one corner. Some vandal did that! It is a shame such a treasure should have been used so damnably!"

"It is for that reason, sir," Stirling replied, "that it is my most beloved volume. I value it above all the books in my library. This is its history:—

"Some fifteen years ago I met at a house party a lady to whom I was instantly attracted. She was handsome, with high coloring, and the most glorious hair. We met often thereafter, and a year later she became my wife. We lived for some time most happily together. Occa-

sionally we had petty disputes that always ended in a victory for both of us!

"About twelve years ago, attracted by a great book sale, I started to form this library, which has been the passion of my life. I read all the catalogues, became skilled in bibliography, lived in the bookshops; spent all my time collating and going over my precious volumes. In the evenings, instead of talking to my wife about the Ives' coming ball, or a problem in bridge, or the newest shades of silk, I pored over the catalogues which came to me from all parts of the world. My wife said nothing at first, but when one bookcase was added to another, crowding out the little Sheraton writing tables, and the bijou cabinets, she objected mildly, 'Why bring all this trash into the house? And besides you never read them. I suppose they don't cost you much. I loaned a few to one of my friends yesterday.'

"I winced; but said nothing.

"Gradually I became absorbed in the pursuit. Other collectors—men after my own heart—rich, and always wearing the oddest clothes—so my good wife said—came to visit me. We would stay up far into the night relating our experiences, telling wonderful stories of how we secured our rarest volumes, and remarking about the prices, which seemed always soaring! My wife knew at last that these old books cost a great deal of money; that I would spend a hundred dollars for an old almanac or an Aldus, while I objected to the forty dollars she paid for a hat. She said she would stand it no longer. I remonstrated, but in vain. She remarked that I had changed—that I no longer loved her. This was not true; I loved her as I always did—but I would not allow anyone to dictate to me.

"However, I displayed no longer the little morocco things that I had bought, but brought them home surreptitiously,

placing them in the corners of the book-case. I concealed them in my news-paper of an evening, or had them sent home when my wife was out shopping, or visiting her friends. Sometimes she would catch me *flagrante delicto,* as I would stealthily remove my beloved from its brown wrapping-paper; or catch me napping with a first edition that she was sure she had not seen before.

"The situation grew intolerable. I could not bear to have some one who had promised to obey me, taunting me at every turn, remorselessly dropping an Elzevir on the floor, or shattering my nerves by insolently showing me a receipted bill for a presentation copy of 'Endymion.' I tried to be gentle with her, to reason with her, to tell her what a scholarly thing I was doing,—but it was of no avail. She became actually jealous of my books. She looked with distrust at every parcel that arrived; she was suspicious of every-

thing that had the *appearance* of a book.

"At first she was only mildly oppressive; she now became severe, scolding continually, making my life a burden. She said my love of books was unnatural, wicked, unspeakable. I could stand it no longer; I could not live with a woman who treated me in so cruel a way. When I told her this she was docile at first, but the fire broke out anew at some new victory of mine in the auction rooms, which one of my spiteful friends told her about. Matthews was always jealous of me, because I had more courage than he and snatched the uncut 'Comus' from him when it was almost within his grasp.

"I tried no longer to bear with my wife —she was a vixen, a mad woman, a very devil. I resolved to divorce her—but on what grounds? I could not think of a single charge that could be placed before a jury,—American juries generally consisted of the most stupid and unimagina-

tive men. My wife said *she* ought to secure the action on the grounds of infidelity,—that I loved my first folio of Shakespeare more than I did her!

"Things came to a climax at last. The famous library of Richard Appleton was to be sold at auction. I was intensely excited, as you can imagine. I read the catalogue item by item, word by word. I marked with ink the things I most *needed* and determined to buy a few exquisite volumes even at the risk of bankruptcy. And there was 'Les Quinze Joyes de Mariage,' the first edition in the superb binding made by Nicolas Eve for Diane de Poitiers. I had resolved to purchase it many years ago when Appleton wrested it from me at the Amherst sale. I had even waited for his death knowing it would again come upon the market. I resolved to have it at all costs. The eventful day arrived. I went to the